UNTRAVELLED TRAILS

HOWARD HILLES

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UNTRAVELLED TRAILS

BY

HOWARD HILLES

BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
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no 1

TO

CORINNE ROOSEVELT ROBINSON

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PAST ENCOURAGEMENT AND ADVICE

UNTRAVELLED TRAILS

I would forsake the beaten thoroughfares,
The rutted roads down which the rabble ride;
Behold the byways beckon — unawares —
They seem to whisper, "Come! The world is wide;
On chartless seas spread your undaunted sails,
And fare forth boldly on untravelled trails!"

If Man is truly "master of his fate,"
And the unchallenged "Captain of his soul,"
Perchance the byways and "the Streets called Straight"
May find their ending at the selfsame goal;
I would not deem one pathway orthodox,
And bar all others with unyielding locks.

So let us leave the busy roads behind,
And seek the bypaths, overgrown with grass,—
Their silence and their solitude are kind;
What matter whether few or many pass!
Each soul must seek, alone, its Holy Grails
By questing bravely on untravelled trails.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PRETENDING AWAY THE YEARS

Pretending Away the Years 1
The First Steps 2
Babies 3
In the Interpreter's House 5
Lullaby 7
A Confession 8
Parental Injustice 9
The First Day of School 11
Teasin' 12
Showing Off 14
An Unlucky Day 16
The Disobliging Clock 18
A Deep Revenge 19
The Rubaiyat of that Dog Jigger . . . 21
A Juvenile Flirtation 22
Hick'ry Banter 24
A Puzzling Question 25
Leather Boots 27
Mamma's "Visit" 29
An Accommodating Conscience 31
The Autobiography of a Copper Cent . . 32
Wasted Effort 36
Father's Post Graduate Course 38
The Gobbler's Opinion of Thanksgiving . . 40
A Vexatious Father 42
The Adventures of Bunny Cottontail . . 44
A Harrowing Experience 46
Parental Inconsistency 47
A Disappointing Show 48
A Retrospect 49
An Obliging Father 50
Nicknames 51
The Washington and Lincoln Debate . . 54
The Last Day of School 57
Some Random Remarks by the Children . . 60
Ye Valiant Knighte and ye Gracelesse Page 62

PAGE

The Great Objection 64
The Hawk's Nest 66
The Pig in the Parlor 69
Secrets 72
When Mr. Screech Owl Came 73
Our First Alma Mater 74
County Fair and Vanity Fair 76
Make Believes 79

HOMEMADE CHRISTMAS POETRY

Homemade Christmas Poetry 83
The First Christmas 84
The Runaway Reindeers 85
The Boy's Candidate 87
A New Beatitude 89
When Santa Was a Boy 90
The Eternal Unfitness of Things . . . 91
How Santa Claus Missed having a Passenger 92
The Spirit of Christmas 95
A Message to Santa Claus 96
An Awful Thought 97
Do Your Christmas Shopping Early . . . 98
Where Was Santa Claus? 100
Santa Claus and the Climate 101
A New Year's Resolution 103
The Mistakes of Santa Claus 104
Juvenile Christmas Oratory 105
A Premature Discovery 109
An After Christmas Lament 111

FROM FURROW AND FIELD

From Furrow and Field 115
Plowing 116
"Farmer's Institoot" 118
A Sign of Spring 121
When I Get to Thinkin' 122
Noontime in Harvest 125
When Fruit Tree Agents Come 127

PAGE

Two Points of View 129
Æsthetics on the Farm 131
Stray Remarks by William 133
The Crossroads 136
An Old Timer's Fire 138
When the Sun Goes Down 139
Yet One More Year 143
Wild Flowers 145
When the "Sign" Is Right 148

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

Lights and Shadows 153
It Is Not Good that Man Should Be Alone 155
The Evolution of Gossip 162
I Said in My Haste 164
The Seamy Side 166
Behind the Mask 167
Sheet Lightning People 169
Distance Lends Enchantment 171
Zeros 174
Trumps 178
Between the Lines 179
The Survival of the Fittest 180
The Hoodoo Days 181
Why? 183
Quarrels 185
The Passing of the Slate 187
Blots 189
It Pays to Advertise 190
Model People 192
His Sweet Tempered Wife 194
Her Easter Thoughts 197
The Old-fashioned Grandmother 200
Introducin' Boomville 202
The Leisure Class in Boomville 205
The Boomville Banner 208
Bumbos Castle 211
A Stone-age Curtain Lecture 219

PAGE

The Hobo 222
But 223
Our Lost Illusions 225
The Girl for Me 227
Rest in Peace 228
The Poet and His Art 229
"Neutral" 231
To Old Mt. Union 233
What Is It All For? 235
My Faith 237
Judge Not 239
The Hermit 241
The Price 243
Sayin' Goodbye 245

PRETENDING AWAY THE YEARS

PRETENDING AWAY THE YEARS

"JUST pretendin' "— we have smiled
Often at the little child,
As it spends its care-free days
Mimicing its elders' ways,
Aping grown folks' joys and woes,
" Togging up " in grown folks' clothes,
Speaking grown-up talk that drips
Oddly from its lisping lips;
It's a pretty game, you'll own,
" Just pretendin' " you are grown!

Now, when many years have passed,
And we're truly grown at last,
It would seem a charming play
To " pretend " the years *away!*
Could such innocent pretence
Bring back childhood's innocence —
Cleanse the stains that have defiled,
" Even as a little child "—
We might well, with tear-wet lids,
" Just pretend " that we were "kids."

THE FIRST STEPS

When " Baby " took his first few steps alone,
We watched the wondrous feat with eager eyes —
Who would have thought that even our " ownest
own "
Could show such superhuman enterprise!

How young he was when he could " patty-cake,"
And gurgle things interpreted as talk,
Then, creeping, leave destruction in his wake —
But what was that to learning how to walk!

Nor thought we then how far, in future years,
The little, toddling feet might go astray —
No time was that for idle thoughts or fears,
Sufficient is the evil to its day!

We placed the little monarch on his throne,
And in obeisance humbly bent the knee;
When " Baby " took his first few steps alone,
It was a wondrous thing to you and me.

BABIES

I LIKE to play around the barn 'n' gather up the eggs,
'N' watch the weenty calves run 'round 'n' kick their wobbly legs;
I fairly love a little calf, till I remember how
Before you know it it is grown, and just a horrid cow.

'N' when I watch the little pigs, I holler with delight,
T' see the little fellows p'tend they're mad, and fight;
They're so cute I've got to love 'em, but my love goes to the dogs,
To find in just a little while, they're greedy, grown up hogs!

I like to watch the little lambs, 'n' listen to 'em bleat,
They jump around so funny on their clumsy lookin' feet —
But I've never felt so friendly with the gentle little lamb,
Since the time I got bumped over by a hateful, cross, old ram!

I watch old Fanny's little colt 'at runs and kicks his heels,
'N' shakes his woozly, woolly tail, to show how good he feels —

He's awful cute an' funny, but he grows so fast, of course,
'At I'm 'fraid, before I know it, 'at he'll be a grown up horse!

I love a little chicken, while it's just a ball of fuzz,
'N' goes around a-peepin', in the comic way it does,
But I know as well as you do 'at the time's a-comin' when
It'll be a proud old rooster, or a cross 'n' fussy hen.

I love little, cooin' babies, with their tiny hands 'n' feet,
'N' all their cunnin' ways, I think, are awful hard to beat;
But if I could just have *my* way, I'd let well enough alone,
For they're nicer when they're little than they'll be when they are grown!

Can't he talk plain! And only two years old —
It's wonderful! And you should hear him sing!
He understands 'most everything he's told,
And he can *say* just almost *anything!*

What's that he says? Good land, you ought to know —
Why, *anyone* would know that "hootoo's" *food!*
He could say *that* an awful while ago,
And I tell you, he thinks his "hootoo's" good!

"Hapse any amps," why, that's "*have* any *lambs*"—
You know the song about "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep."
It's wonderful, sometimes, how music calms
That little tad and puts him off to sleep!

"Apaps"— that's *rabbit* — surely you can tell —
Sometimes he'll show you how the "apaps" goes;
Why, *sir*, that boy could almost learn to spell —
It's simply *wonderful* how much he knows!

"Seetbooloand"— you surely understand —
He's *singing* — don't you know the words and tune,
That old, familiar hymn, "Sweet Beulah Land"—
What! "Oonce?"— you ought to know that that means *moon!*

"Aants Dada pop"— he wants his Grandpa's *pipe,*
And "backack"— that's *tobacco* — don't you see?
"I aants t'moke," he says, the little snipe —
Ain't he about as cute as cute can be!

"Koom hooper!" Now I guess you understand —
He's calling us to *supper*, plain as day;
"Utup!" Did you hear that? My goodness Land!
That's "shut up," as the neighbor children say!

Can't he talk plain! And only two years old —
It's wonderful! And you should hear him sing!
He understands 'most everything he's told,
And he can *say* just almost *anything!*

LULLABY

Sleep, my baby, sleep,
Sleep, my little pet;
Evening shadows creep
Where the sun has set.

Sleep, my baby, sleep,
Sleep, my little pet;
Angels guard and keep —
Do not fear or fret.

Sleep, my baby, sleep,
Sleep, my little pet;
As the dark grows deep,
Childish woes forget.

. . .

Sleep, my baby, sleep,
Sleep, my little pet;
Vain the tears we weep —
Thou art with us yet!

A CONFESSION

Last night I robbed and stole! The crime I can
but own;
Remorse so smites my soul, I must my sin atone.
No hardened burglar I, but oh, my need was great!
When such temptations try, who can resist his
fate?
True, the relentless law might never try the case —
No judge with stern set jaw confront me, face
to face;
I need no Third Degree — my crime I must dis-
close,
Its burden staggers me, and hourly greater grows.
The owner sobbed and sobbed —" O, my offense
is rank,
It smells to Heaven "— I robbed — I robbed the
Baby's Bank!

PARENTAL INJUSTICE

I THINK it's mean as mean can be, of father an' of mother —
W'y, they jus' don't love me at all, like they do baby brother;
It's jus' as plain as anything — there couldn't no one doubt it;
They showed it, too, this mornin', an' I'm jus' heart broke about it!

W'en baby pulls my papa's hair, er kicks him with his feet,
W'y, papa only pats his head an' says, "Now ain't he sweet?"
Then baby pounds my mamma too, an' pulls her nose er ear,
An' mamma sits an' kisses him an' says, "Ain't he a dear?"

Now since they 'pear t' like it so, I thought 'at I 'u'd try it;
I guess I never will again — it almost caused a riot;
I pulled pa's hair an' kicked him an'— boo-hoo — an' he exploded,
Jus' like a rusty shot gun 'at you never knew was loaded.

T' finish the experiment, I pulled my mamma's
nose;
I don't know yet what happened — an' never will
I s'pose —
I'm sorto' dazed an' muddled — but this much
is mighty clear,
That mamma didn't kiss me er say, "Ain't she a
dear?"

I didn't hurt 'em half as much as baby often
does —
But they love *him* an' don't love *me* — an' that
is why it was —
I did jus' like the baby, an' they say he's sweet
clear through.
W'y don't they say the same of me — boo-hoo,
boo-hoo, BOO-HOO!

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Our "baby" starts to school, to-day,
With eager feet and dancing eyes —
'Tis strangely still, with her away,
And strangely slow each hour flies.

The silence brings the spirit rest,
And yet its quietness I rue —
It whispers how the old home nest
Will seem, shared just by me and you.

But then the little feet must start
Upon the long and untried way —
So be it that with sturdy heart
Our "baby" starts to school to-day.

TEASIN'

I LIKE to tease my playmates, though I shouldn't,
I suppose;
I tease 'em 'bout their parents 'n' I tease 'em
'bout their "beaus,"
'N' 'bout the color of their hair, er the way they
wear their clothes —
Oh, there's nothin' that I like so well as teasin'!

I tease 'em 'bout their lessons, if they ever chance
to fail,
Or if they always know 'em, still I tease 'em tooth
an' nail,
'N' they dassent tell the teacher or I call 'em
"tattletale"—
For there's nothing that I like so well as teasin'!

I often tease my sisters until their tempers crack,
'N' then I tease my mamma till she cries, an'
that's a fac',
'N' end by teasin' papa till he says he'll break my
back —
Oh, there's nothin' that I like so well as teasin'!

I tease all mamma's callers till they're 'most too
mad to speak,
'N' one who came from Boston said I really was
"unique,"
'N' my older brother told me that was Latin for
"a freak"—
But there's nothin' that I like so well as teasin'!

I like to tease my teachers, so I break 'most every
rule,
I sit there lookin' innocent 'n' actin' like a fool,
'N' I'm generally punished more than anyone in
school —
Still there's nothin' that I like so well as teasin'!

Pa says that up in Heaven I would tease the angels
there,
Until their dispositions would be much the worse
for wear,
'N' if I went to Satan I'd be more than he could
bear —
For there's nothin' that I like so well as teasin'!

. . . .

But I went to bed last evenin', when my supper
was not light,
And I had a dream that gave me such an awful,
awful fright
That you'll never catch me teasin'— oh, I had a
dreadful night,
'N' there's nothin' that I hate so bad as teasin'!

Every soul I ever teased at came 'n' stood about
my bed;
They burnt me with hot pokers 'n' they beat me
till I bled,
'N' they never stopped a minute till they left me
there for dead —
So, like Postum advertisements — THERE'S A
REASON!

SHOWING OFF

You've noticed how, when strangers come,
The children do unheard of things —
Such deeds as strike beholders dumb,
And make their peace of mind take wings.

The mother's face turns scarlet red,
The strangers glance away and cough,
While father wishes he were dead,
The *children* — they're just "showing off."

Their elders wonder, they confess,
Why children never yet have thought
That they the stranger might impress
By simply doing as they *ought*.

But parents know to no avail
Shall they command, entreat or scoff —
Each guest's arrival turns them pale,
And starts their offspring "showing off."

They're well behaved when all alone,
But act like porkers at their trough,
Or dogs that fight about a bone,
When thus for company "showing off."

Though we continue to the grave
Still "showing off," we fondly pray
We learn appearances to save,
And do it in a wiser way.

But this we know, that ever more
This bitter cup our lips shall quaff,
That every stranger at our door
Shall find the children "showing off!"

AN UNLUCKY DAY

I FELT so bad all yesterday,
And had the most unlucky time:
My pet canary got away;
I lost my only silver dime.

I let my china dishes fall,
And fell myself and bumped my head,
And broke the nose off my new doll —
I almost wished that I was dead!

My papa didn't care at all,
But just pretended to, and says
That when I've grown up twice as tall,
I'll know what trouble *is*, he guess.

Told how the " fly " et all his wheat,
And how the drouth cut short his corn,
And costs so much to dress and eat
That he wish *he* was never born!

And when at last I went to bed,
I couldn't go to sleep, but cried —
I had a sore spot on my head,
But it was sorer yet *inside!*

Then, all at once, a little star
Winked at the moon and said, " What fools
These grown-up human beings are,
For all their learning and their schools!

" Their troubles that they think so great,
Say in a thousand years from now,
Won't look so large, I'm here to state,
Or so important, anyhow.

" Or, let 'em come up here with *us*,
Some million miles up in the sky,
The woes that made them fume and fuss
Would look too small for naked eye!"

And then the moon smiled down on me,
And said that human griefs and joys
Are relative in size, you see,
The same for grown folks and for boys.

Next morning, when the round, red sun
Peeped on my bed, it seemed to say:
" This time I'll bring you loads of fun,
For this will be a brand new day!"

THE DISOBLIGING CLOCK

Why is it, when I've earache, in the middle of the night,
An' can hardly keep fr'm cryin', though I try with all my might,
When I lay in bed an' listen to the ticking of the clock,
That it seems to wait a minute between the "tick" an' "tock?"

But when my playmates visit, an' can only stay an hour,
That clock ac's so provokin' 'at it makes us awful sour,
For it tumbles out the seconds an' the minutes in a flock,
So you scarcely hear it tickin' an' it never stops to "tock!"

A DEEP REVENGE

To-day the teacher of our school,
Just 'cause I broke some little rule,
Made *me* stand on the schoolhouse floor —
So I don't like him any more!

'N' I have just made up my mind,
Because he treats me so unkind,
'At just to be revenged on him
I'm goin' to climb Fame's highest limb.

I guess 'at when he's old an' bent,
An' I'm elected President,
'At he'll feel sorry more an' more
Fer makin' me stand on the floor.

I guess 'at when he's old an' poor,
Like teachers always get for sure,
An' I'm a proud old millionaire,
He'll wish't he'd treated me more fair.

Er mebbe I'll write famous books,
Like where Nick Carter hauls in crooks;
An' I'd just snub him, then, an' laff
Ef he should ast my autograff.

Er I just wish't there'd be a war,
So I could be a commydore
Er general — an' then I know
He'd wish't he'd never used me so.

Er better yet, I'd like to be
A pirate captain on the sea,
An' then he'd haf to stay on land
Er else be captured by our band.

I'll bet that when my teacher's old
An' I am great, I'll ac' so cold,
He'll kick himself until he's sore
Fer makin' me stand on the floor.

Course *now* he only laffs at me
When I look mad as mad kin be —
But when I'm big, I'll have his gore,
Fer makin' me stand on the floor!

THE RUBAIYAT OF THAT DOG JIGGER

THERE are dogs whose bark is louder,
None can show more vim and vigor —
To compare them makes us prouder;
So we sing in praise of Jigger!

There are dogs whose gait is faster,
But they could not be more eager —
And he sticks like porous plaster;
So we sing in praise of Jigger!

Some dogs' pedigrees are brighter,
But that doesn't cut no figger —
Couldn't *any* dog *act* whiter;
So we sing in praise of Jigger!

Some dogs' sense of smell is stronger —
He's unrivalled as a digger —
None can keep a-goin' longer;
So we sing in praise of Jigger!

Mebbe there are dogs that's smarter —
There are many that are bigger —
But not one for him we'd barter;
So we sing in praise of Jigger!

A JUVENILE FLIRTATION

Their homes lay near, and face to face;
Between them ran the highway straight —
'Twas here that this romance took place —
And She was seven and He was eight.

It was each parent's stern command
That neither should that highway cross —
And this is why, you understand,
That Love's sweet self was at a loss.

He went to his front yard to play,
And shot his arrows 'round with skill;
She sat and looked the other way;
He whistled — but she sat there still.

Then he produced his Noah's Ark,
And scattered out its wolves and bears —
She did not gaze, she did not mark,
But 'tended to her own affairs.

Then brought he forth his red wheeled cart,
And hauled a load of sand or two —
In vain — the charmer sat apart,
He saw with grief it would not do.

Then did he seek a ripe, red peach,
A yellow pear and purple plum,
And placed them in convenient reach —
She rocked her doll, and did not come.

At this he turned his back in wrath,
And blew his nose, and wiped his eyes —
She sauntered out the beaten path,
And started in to make mud pies.

She shook her muslin bonnet off,
Thus setting free her golden curls,
And, though his anger makes him cough —
A fellow *can't* stay mad with *girls*.

Again the Noah's Ark appears —
Alas for parent's stern decree,
The stormy sky in radiance clears,
And he forgets and so does she.

Till, for perhaps the thousandth time,
A parent with a cruel heart
Shall find them, black with dust and grime,
And tear their blighted souls apart.

HICK'RY BANTER

In our early days at school,
Nothing could so well suffice
To fill our cup of pleasure full
As "hick'ry banter" on thin ice.

One of us would skate across,
Then another, though we knew,
As the ice would crack and toss,
That we'd very soon break through.

And we'd feel a heartfelt joy,
And a happiness complete,
When at last some luckless boy
Would break through and wet his feet.

We play "hick'ry banter" still
After power, success or wealth,
Driving with a heedless will
Over conscience, right and health.

Yea, and when a comrade fails,
Still our sympathy is brief;
Secretly his neighbor rails
At his failure and his grief.

A PUZZLING QUESTION

I HAD a fight, the other day,
And whipped my seatmate, Dora Gray,
And scratched her face and tore her dress —
Now she'll behave herself, I guess —
I only showed her who was boss,
So why should Teacher act so cross?

And once, when I was playin' ball,
A-bouncin' it against the wall,
It hit upon the window sash
And broke a pane of glass, *k-smash!*
I gave it such a little toss,
So why should Teacher act so cross?

One day I took my darkey doll
(I didn't mean to let it fall)—
I'd printed Teacher's name on it,
And, sir, I thought he'd take a fit —
Across its back I'd pasted moss,
But why should *that* make Teacher cross?

I get mixed up in 'Rithmetic,
Till it 'most makes my teacher sick;
I twist up dollars, pounds and quarts
Until he gets all out of sorts —
I told him twenty was a gross,
But why should that make Teacher cross?

One day I found a fotygraff
In Teacher's desk — I have to laff —

It was his *girl*, and looked so sweet,
She just looked good enough to eat —
That surely wasn't no great loss,
So why should Teacher act so cross?

My little brother, Ross, and I
My mamma says are 'nough to try
The patience of a martered saint —
Sometimes we almost make her faint —
If kids are all like me and Ross,
She says, *no wonder Teacher's* cross.

LEATHER BOOTS

I STILL recall a distant past,
When we plucked knowledge by the roots;
In those days things were made to last,
And boys like me wore leather boots.

True, their appearance was not neat;
They always made appalling noise,
And they were torture to the feet,
But thought quite good enough for boys.

If to our elders we'd complain
'Twas evident our cause was lost,
For we forthwith would ascertain
That *they* went *barefoot* in the frost!

The shoe man measured off our feet,
And then got busy in his shop,
And turned those boots out, all complete,
With iron toe and gorgeous top.

They were a treasure, too, *at first*,
They felt so soft and new and nice —
The softness left them when immersed
In soaking water once or twice.

Thenceforth to get them on we'd groan
And puff and pull and sweat and cough,
Yet this was nothing, I must own,
To what it meant to get them *off!*

We rubbed them, then, with boiling grease;
In vain our tender hands we'd burn;
Alas! that comfortable peace
To our young feet would ne'er return!

Yet when my children come to me
For footwear several times each year,
I mourn that such a change must be,
And hold those boots in memory dear.

MAMMA'S "VISIT"

I wish't my mamma'd come back home 'n' stay,
Seems like a year that she's been gone away.
She went "just for a visit," so she said,
But looked as though she'd 'bout as soon be dead.

I don't see why she had to cry an' cry,
When she kissed me an' Babe an' Tim good-bye,
An' say, "Poor little tads," an' cry some more,
Until her eyes were all swelled up 'n' sore.

Ner I don't see why papa feels so bad
When it's the longest visit mamma's had
Since I remember — fer I'm sure I know
If I'd a chance that I'd be glad to go.

But Tim saw mamma yesterday, an' said
She looked all pale an' sick an' was in bed,
An' lots of people was, an' *they* were white,
Like people get when they're not feelin' right.

An' girls with little white caps on their heads
Were waitin' on the sick folks in the beds,
A-bringin' things t' eat, on little trays,
An' scootin', quiet-like, just everyways.

Then everywhere was such a funny smell —
Tim said would *make* you sick if you were *well* —
Just like the stuff that papa used to keep,
He said, to "put sooperflewus cats to sleep."

Next time, I guess that it's my turn to go
An' visit mamma, for I want her so,
An' Mrs. Smith's a-goin', for she sent
Me word she'd take me with her when she went.

Then she cried too, an' said she felt so bad
About the " opperashun " mamma had —
I wonder what she meant — I wonder, is it
A word the grown folks use that means a visit?

AN ACCOMMODATING CONSCIENCE

I WONDER why it is that when I lay awake at night
I think when daylight comes again, I'll always do what's right;
My conscience stings me for my sins, as long as it is dark —
When daylight comes, it sorto' grins, and goes off on a lark.

I think the grown folks consciences act 'bout the same as mine,
And seldom bother them, I guess, when things are goin' fine;
But soon as trouble comes — like night — you'll find that they repent,
And then when things are goin' right, their consciences relent.

Perhaps that's what the daylight's fer — perhaps God's wisdom guessed
At night our consciences would stir, and then they'd need a rest —
If He'd a-wanted boys like me to *always* do what's right,
He'd left the daylight out, you see, and made it always *night*.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A COPPER CENT

I'm just a little copper cent,
And hard to get and easy spent,
And I was made long years ago
By Uncle Sam himself, you know.

At first I was as bright as gold —
You'd never think it, now I'm old;
The children hailed me with delight
Because I was so new and bright.

I've travelled long and far since then,
Among the queerest sorts of men,
So it's no wonder that I know
As much again as *people* do.

When first I left the busy Mint,
I'd neither tarnish, flaw nor dint —
I do not mention this to boast,
Since now I'm but a wreck, at most.

I first was hailed with noisy joy
To swell the treasure of a boy,
Then travelled to a candy store,
And never saw that boy more.

Next day I went to Sunday School,
Where pennies seemed to be the rule —
You never saw such affluence
Of every kind of copper cents!

I made two other visits soon,
And then I went to a saloon —
I didn't like its moral air,
But there was lots of money there.

Next day I left that godless camp
In the vest pocket of a tramp,
For just a day or two, and then
Went back to a saloon again.

About this time, as you'll suspect,
I needed a good " disinfect "—
I travelled north, I travelled south —
Oh, *never* put me in your *mouth!*

And then I struck a miser's lair,
And almost gasped to get fresh air;
He squeezed me till, in course of time,
I thought perhaps I was a dime.

He died — and left me to a man
Constructed on another plan,
Who lightly said, " It's just a cent,"
Nor cared how soon or far I went.

Next day I started out again,
The servant of all sorts of men;
I'd leave a pocket all but bare
And land upon a millionaire.

I went by wagon — went by train —
On foot — in ships that sail the main —
And once they lost me in the dust
Till I was covered with green rust.

I have belonged to some young men —
I pray I never may again;
With *copper* cents their purse was lined,
They never *had* the *other* kind!

I've bought enough of cheap cigars,
I guess, to load a train of cars,
And glided down some slot machine
Till just the memory turns me green.

While as for candy and for gum,
I surely have been "going some";
And monthly, as a general rule,
You'd find me at some Sunday School.

And yet, for all the years I've passed,
I'm not respected much at last,
For copper, even when it's old,
Is never honored as is gold.

So I've been snubbed uncounted times
By all the nickels and the dimes,
And once — but that was years ago —
Even a *three-cent-piece* acted so!

While as for gold and paper cash,
They simply looked on me as trash,
Although Ben Franklin used to say
I should be honored more than they.

A boy took me once, alack!
And laid me on a railroad track,
And I assure you that since *that*
I've ever since felt *crushed* and *flat!*

And then — it pierced me to the soul —
Right through my rim he bored a HOLE!
Then put a ribbon through, by Heck,
And hung me on his sweetheart's neck!

I've been worth nothing ever since —
Sometimes it almost makes me wince;
So now I've slipped away and hid
Among the playthings of a kid.

So I am just a copper cent,
All rusted, battered up and bent;
And with this moral I will end:
I'm hard to GET, *but not to* SPEND!

WASTED EFFORT

I've figured till I'm goin' t' quit —
I don't like 'Rithmetic a bit,
Ner I can't see th' use of it —
I'll tell you why:
I've noticed business folks to-day
Have thrown their 'rithmetics away,
So most of what the teachers say
Is all a lie!

F'r instance, I can work an hour,
Until I'm mad 'n' cross 'n' sour,
On how much bran 'n' how much flour
A man should get
F'r certain given pounds of wheat,
But at th' *mill* they work it neat —
Some "doo-dad" figures it complete
F'r *them*, you bet!

'N' when our grocer makes his sales
He throws things on *computing scales*,
Like we toss pennies — "heads er tails"—
'N' quick as "scat,"
Writes th' amount, you bet your neck,
Where we'd write figures by th' peck —
Then get th' answer wrong, by Heck,
I'll bet my hat!

'N' t'other day I went with pa
T' get a load of coal f'r ma,

'N' then I kindo' thought I saw
Some chance f'r fun —
W'at that coal cost — 'twuz no mere song —
I'd had t' *figure*, loud 'n' long —
Then, more'n likely, got it wrong,
When I was done.

Yep, I'd a-covered half my slate,
'N' made mistakes, as sure as Fate —
Th' coal man said, " six ninety-eight,"
'N' that was all —
It was s' easy, bless y'r heart,
I know my jaws jus' fell apart —
He simply squinted at a chart
Hung on th' wall!

I helped pa pay some interest due —
I hate those " interest problems," too;
Thought I, " old man, it's up t' you
T' figure some "—
It seemed a mixed up mess t' me —
Th' banker said, " six eighty-three,"
Quick as a wink,— w'y Jeminee,
It struck me dumb!

Pa says they've got *machines* t' add —
I haven't one, but wish I had,
F'r addin' makes me tired 'n' mad,
'N' gives me aches —
They'll *get* machines — it makes me sick —
I wish 'at they'd invent 'em quick —
To work th' whole blame 'Rithmetic
Without mistakes!

FATHER'S POST GRADUATE COURSE

In boyhood days, as you, I trust,
With due contrition will recall,
You studied only when you must —
A case of "groundhog," that was all!
The teacher might be cross and glum,
Or coax or wheedle, scold or tease,
And call you lazy, call you dumb —
You heeded not such things as these!

But *now*, when schooldays long are past,
You're punished for that laziness —
And Nemesis strikes you at last;
You've *got* to study now, I guess!
For, as you read your evening news,
Your children pile upon your lap
With a demand you can't refuse —
"Please help me with my problems, Pap."

You slyly con forgotten rules,
And some, perhaps, you never knew —
And speak about the splendid schools
That poured the knowledge into you.
You swear — aside — as there you sit —
No chance to dodge, evade or shirk;
You'd rather die than to admit
There's anything *you* cannot work!

Each child repeats the process o'er —
It is, in truth, a dreadful fate —
But at the age of, say, two score,
You're really fit to graduate!
The labor brings its due reward —
Unceasing toil has turned the trick,
And you — for which you thank the Lord —
Can work the whole Arithmetic!

THE GOBBLER'S OPINION OF THANKSGIVING

This must be what the human folks call their
Thanksgiving Day,
And they enjoy it lots, I guess, from what I hear
them say;
But when I think how turkey deaths have hap-
pened by the score,
I wonder what us turkeys have to be so thankful
for.

I had a splendid family once — their numbers now
are few —
They all died an untimely death, excepting one or
two;
I'd half a hundred children once or maybe even
more;
What can this childless turkey have to be so thank-
ful for?

I saw my very finest son beheaded yesterday,
And I feel sure it was his bones the cook just threw
away —
Such sights as these I'm sure would make 'most any
parent sore,
So tell me what us turkeys have to be so thankful
for.

I might be thankful I'm alive, had I not heard them
say,
" We'll save the gobbler, there, to eat for dinner
Christmas Day ";
I ask you, with an end like that immutably in store,
What can a poor doomed Gobbler have to be so
thankful for?

A VEXATIOUS FATHER

Ma says that Father leaves his clothes, as locusts
do their shells,
Just scattered everywhere he goes, in spite of all
she tells,
And that it drives her 'most insane, when things
are tidied quite,
He comes through like a hurricane and they are
left a " fright."

She says that when she goes away and Father's
left to cook,
Her kitchen, somehow, will display a sort of
stormy look,
And its disorder will increase till every pot and pan
Is scattered 'round, all daubed with grease — ain't
that just like a *man!*

Ma's patience gets almighty slim when Father
sweeps the floor —
She *knows* that she could follow him and get a
bushel more;
And even then, she says, she'll find — it drives her
to despair —
What dust he hasn't left behind is scattered in
the air.

She says she doesn't want to vote — her time is
all employed,
Or home would be, as Moses wrote, " without form
and void";

In fact, it troubles all of us to keep our Christian grace
With Father constituted thus, and litt'ring up the place.

Still, Father gives us all a love that's boundless, deep and wide —
Ours needs assistance from Above, the way it's often tried;
But Ma, though Father's faults are tall, forgives them on the plea,
His heart, at least, keeps after all right where it ought to be.

THE ADVENTURES OF BUNNY COTTONTAIL

THERE he hides beneath a rail —
Long of ear and short of tail —
Sheltered from the wintry gale.

A cruel hunter's on his trail,
And yet his spirit doth not quail —
Heroic Bunny Cottontail!

Straight to a log we see him sail,
A ferret follows, tooth and nail —
What now shall hollow logs avail?

Now over meadow — over dale —
We follow still the tireless trail
Of little Bunny Cottontail.

Would that he had a coat of mail,
Or might some friendly tree-trunk scale,
Or fly like birds that breast the gale.

Alas for Bunny Cottontail!
His hope for life grows weak and stale,
At last he trembles and turns pale.

He seeks a brushpile's shelter frail,
His dauntless heart begins to fail,
And mournful thoughts his soul assail.

He's driven forth 'mid shots like hail —
Can speed or cunning now avail
Our hero, Bunny Cottontail?

The time has come to draw the veil —
Weep, my children, weep and wail —
End of Bunny Cottontail!

A HARROWING EXPERIENCE

Wunst I found a hornet's nest —
Had a grouch —
Was forbidden to molest;
Said I'd do as I thought best;
Heaved a club right through the pest,—
Hollered "Ouch!"

Comes t' movin' on my feet,
I'm no slouch —
Planned t' hit 'em one 'n' beat,
Y' might say, a quick retreat;
Hornets beat me every heat,—
Hollered "Ouch!"

Thought at first that I'd been shot,
'Menced t' crouch —
Might as well been, like as not;
Gee! The atmosphere seemed hot;
All the comfort that I got,
Hollered "Ouch!"

Went home later, with a face
Like a pouch —
Father stopped in midst of "grace,"
Went and got a harness trace —
Nothin' seems to fit the case,—
Only "Ouch!"

PARENTAL INCONSISTENCY

The other day, out in our barn,
When Pa was milkin' our ol' cow,
She kicked, and papa he said, "DARN!"
An' wasn't that jus' awful, now?

He's apt t' say 'most anything
When he don't know that we're around,
An' ol' hen flops him with her wing
Er scratches up his garden ground.

But then he'll go an' lecture *us*
'Bout ever sayin' words 'at's bad,
An' tell us, with an awful fuss,
He never did when he's a lad.

A DISAPPOINTING SHOW

My papa told me once, if I would hoe
His garden patch, 'n' weed it, every row,
'At purty soon he'd take me to a "Show."

I went to Ringlin' Brothers' Circus once,
'N' saw the camels an' the elefunts,
'At dance 'n' do all sorts of funny stunts.

I s'posed of course he meant a show like that,
With tigers, tamer 'n' our ol' tabby cat,
'N' clowns with painty face 'n' pointy hat.

'N' so I hoed 'n' hoed, 'n' sweat 'n' sweat,
'N' got all tired out 'n' overhet;
Thinks I, th' Show'll pay fer it, you bet!

Then after I had finished ev'ry row,
W'y, papa said t' hurry 'n' we'd go
'N' spend a pleasant evenin' at the Show.

. . .

I read one time 'at "man was made t' mourn";
It's so, I guess, f'r sure as you were born
The only "Show" I saw was *ears of corn!*

'Bout that time I tell you 'at I felt blue,
'N' mad 'n' cross besides — 'n' so would you —
It was a *Corn Show* 'at he took me to!

A RETROSPECT

When you were eight and I was nine
Life loomed before us fair and fine,
And earth in pristine beauty shone,
Without a blemish or a flaw;
But how we wished that we were grown,
And freed from the parental law —
For I was yours and you were mine,
When you were eight and I was nine.

When you were eight and I was nine,
The "stump" was circled by the "vine"—
Struck by the arrows Cupid aims,
We planned to marry, by and by;
Perhaps we did not mention names,
But — you knew whom, and so did I —
For I was yours and you were mine,
When you were eight and I was nine.

When you were eight and I was nine,
The future gleamed with light divine —
But that was years and years ago;
Love never lost its old time charms,
And so the love-god with his bow
Has placed life partners in our arms,
But . . . you have yours and I have mine,
At fifty-eight and fifty-nine!

AN OBLIGING FATHER

Whenever circuses come near —
Which generally is twice a year —
You'll always find one happy pair:
My pa and I are always there.

Pa always tells folks that of course
You couldn't drag *him* there by force;
There's nothin' there he cares t' see,—
He has t' go along with me.

But I have noticed pa will laugh
At all the doin's more by half
And seems t' like 'em more than I,
'N' so I've always wondered why.

'N' I believe, when I am grown
So I can go to shows alone,
Pa'll hunt a boy to *adopt*,
Before he'll have his circus stopped.

NICKNAMES

You have noticed how fond parents will worry
and debate
On the naming of their offspring as a matter of
much weight,
And, after due discussion, they will settle on a
name
That might well be immortal, on the Rolls of
deathless Fame —
A name replete with dignity, euphonious in sound,
In short, a name that seems to say, "I must grow
world renowned!"

Alas! The cruel world, in scorn, will likely cast
aside,
Or twist, deform and mutilate that cognomen of
pride;
Thus, Raymond Rudolph Thompson, if his young
form be thin,
Will be known at school as "Skinny," shortened
later on to "Skin";
Or if, perchance, an auburn thatch surmount his
youthful head,
He'll be christened "Redhead Thompson," or, in
common parlance, "Red."

The roster of my school days is with such nick-
names filled,
Now long unused and oftentimes their bearers'
voices stilled;

Some names showed boyish irony — the slowest boy
called " Swift,"
While " Deacon" Jones had wide renown as one
of sinful drift.
One youth we christened " Satan " Smith — bad
past all mortal hope —
While one long-legged, lanky lad we surnamed
" Antelope."

Our nicknames were not always kind; for instance,
is it meet
To give a maiden such a name as " Anna Mary
Pete"?
And names like " Fat " and " Buck " and " Skin,"
whatever their intent,
Would scarce to an outsider's ear convey a com-
pliment!
And I fear a lack of due respect we may have also
showed,
To give a child whose name was Hopp the soubri-
quet, " Hoptoad! "

The world gives nicknames to us still, as on our
way we trudge;
As, for example, Satan Smith — to-day they call
him Judge;
" Fat " Henry's called a " financier," while as for
" Deacon " Jones,
He's nicknamed " seven sixty one," and works at
breaking stones —

While " Antelope "— I have to laugh — he's now
an LL.D.,
And almost all the alphabet — from A.B. clear
to Z.

Folks used to say " Pudd " Williams was the
dumbest of the lot,
And, far as I could ever see, were *right*, as like as
not!
But sir! He went to Europe and studied music
there,
And came back looking foreign-like, and with a
mop of hair,
And people flock to hear him play, and pay an
awful price;
They call him " Signor Guillemo "— I've been to
hear him twice!

But as the nicknames of our youth have long since
passed away,
So shall the ones we're wearing now, when dignified
and gray;
Nor matters it beneath what names our inner
selves may hide,—
They are, in truth, but outer shells, whose kernel
lies inside;
For *words*, unless they stand for *deeds*, are breaths
of idle air;
May what our nicknames symbolize be pure and
true and fair!

THE WASHINGTON AND LINCOLN DEBATE

We hold a "literary" at the Johnson's Corners School;
You'll find it interestin' and instructive, as a rule;
Our members have such talent — not a one's a common scrub —
So you shouldn't miss a meeting of the "Webster Lyc'um Club."

We've argued "whether Church or School does greatest good to men?"
And the respective merits of the "sword" and of the "pen";
We've proved and settled that the "end" can't justify the "means,"
And Q.E.D.'d that Uncle Sam should sell the Philippines.

In fact, 'most ev'ry question that commences with "*Resolved*"
Has been settled at our meetings and for all the future solved;
But this unanswered problem is eternally on hand,
"Whether Washington or Lincoln was most useful to the land?"

Tom Smith is the debater who is hardest to refute —
He'll find the facts to prove his case, or make some up to suit,

And he'll get up and prove to you with very little bother
That the greatest of our great men was our country's honored Father,

That but for George's hatchet and his little cherry tree
The children might be liars, which is very wrong, you see,
And that but for his courage and his skill in war-like things
Our country 'u'd be bossed around by foreign lords and kings.

He says if Lincoln saved the land, when George was in his grave,
If't hadn't been for Washington, there'd been no land t' save;
"In fact, but f'r George Washington," says Tom, in tones of scorn,
"W'y, such a man as Lincoln might never have been born!"

Then the Lincoln side makes answer, "Washington's a 'ristocrat,
'N' his hatchet 'n' th' cherry tree a fairy tale, at that;
'N' seein' Washington was rich 'n' Lincoln was so poor,
It showed 'at Lincoln was th' best to grow so great, that's sure.

" 'N' th' Father of his Country," they remarked, with scornful tongue,
" Would find his orphaned country dead, while innocent 'n' young,
If't hadn't been f'r Lincoln, who steered it through th' strife,
'N' saved it fr'm destruction, at th' cost of his own life! "

So the debate runs on and on — the side that talks the last
You think has got the other side all tied up hard and fast,
So this perplexing problem we have never set at rest,
Whether Washington or Lincoln was the greatest and the best.

THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

Us kids are feelin' mighty good — to-day's the
last of school,
An' then we're done with dry ol' books, an' mindin'
Teacher's rule;
We all pretend we're sorry-like an' then go off an'
grin,
When the year of school is over, an' vacation times
begin.

But we've all learned a lot of things we never used
t' know,
'Bout jografy an' 'rithmetic an' how grammar talk
should go,
An' we can spell some whoppin' words, like " parel-
lellogram,"
An' know 'most all about our hearts an' lungs an'
diafram.

We saw a picture of our brains, an' near as I can
tell,
They look 'bout like th' kernel inside a walnut
shell —
While our " digestive systems," where we get our
stomach aches,
Looked esactly in th' picture like a basket full of
snakes!

The kids that's in the Primer class have learned
that " I am May;

I am a girl and I can run; can you run; can you play?"
And in th' grammar class we've learnt not never t' say "hain't,"
While words like "ourn" an' "yourn" an' "hisn" jus' make us almost faint!

We learnt about "mixed numbers," too, though I could never see
W'y they should call some numbers that — they *all* look mixed to me;
An' lots of problems told us, too, to make a diagram —
Pa says he don't know what 'at means —'n' he don't care a — *bit!*

Or, "If one man is twenty days a-finishin' a task,
How long would ten men do it in?" th' 'rithmetic would ask.
Pa says that you could figure that till you've worn out your pen,
But any *fool* 'u'd know it all depended on the *men!*

We've learnt a lot of hist'ry, too, an' know that it is true
Columbus stood an egg on end in 1692,
An' how th' Pilgrims came acrost from England in a flock,
An' landed first at Wyandotte — er was it Plymouth Rock?

An' then we've studied jografy, until we know a lot
'Bout Arctic zones where it is cold an' Torpid
where it's hot;
How land with water all around is always called
an isthmus —
T' tell you half the things we know would take
fr'm now till Christmas!

I s'pose that now vacation comes, we'll soon forget
it all,
An' hafto jus' begin again, when school begins
next fall.
But anyhow, we're mighty glad, as kids have always
been,
When the year of school is over and vacation times
begin.

SOME RANDOM REMARKS BY THE CHILDREN

I

Since sister's wearin' spectacles, because her eyes
are bad,
Us kids all call her "Grandma," an' my, that
makes her mad!

II

Says little Bee, with sudden thought, after a sol-
emn pause,
"When I grow up, I tell you what! I'll marry
Santa Claus!"

III

There's a boy at our school
Always actin' like a fool —
Turns t' me an' winks an' nods,
An' I hit him with paper wads.

IV

Says little Bus, when prayers were said,
As downward drooped her sleepy head,
"Now I lay me — into bed."

V

If chickens always hatch from eggs
That other chickens lay,
Where did the first egg come from?
I wonder, anyway.

VI

When I rode on the train one time,
The old conductor, dressed in blue,
He said he really b'lieved 'at I'm
Outdoin' Edison a few,—
An' he went on to say, " I mean
That you're an A-one talkin' machine."

VII

Where does th' stars all go to
When night all goes away?
I watched 'em all last evening,
But I can't find one today!

VIII

Long ago, my little girl,
Whispers Memory, reminiscent,
You would shake an angry curl
In defiance —" *No, I'm tissent!* "

More grammatically today,
But with no less dauntless will,
When your duty calls for " nay "
May it be your answer still!

YE VALIANT KNIGHTE AND YE GRACELESSE PAGE

Sir Bum de Bum, in armor,
Returneth from the war,
Where he hath gathered honor
In many a combat sore.

Behind him rideth lightly
His young and graceless page,
Whose shameless pranks hath often
His master filled with rage.

Sir Bum feared never Paynim
Or Saracen, forsooth!
So much as the designings
Of this irrev'rent youth.

His armor may protect him
From hostile foeman's shaft —
Not from the jests so ribald,
Whereat the page hath laughed.

Once, whilst Sir Bum wast swimming,
Nor fearing ill, perchance,
Ye page slipped up behind him
And stole his iron pants!

Again, as he wast dreaming
Of tournaments he'd win,
Ye page didst ope his armor
And slipped a hornet in.

Sir Bum once went to battle
With all his knightly troop,
Upon his back this legend:
"USE BEATEM'S OXTAIL SOUP!"

Once, at the hour of midnight,
Rose long and loud alarms;
A Voice came through the darkness,
"Sir Bum, yield up your arms!"

Sir Bum rode forth for battle
With haughty air, I trow,—
Ye page, with wooden weapons,
Was mounted on a cow!

Once, as Sir Bum walked idly
Beside his castle moat,
Ye page didst loose behind him
A fierce and warlike goat.

As though by lance sent flying,
Sir Bum went on his head —
Stunned by the heavy armor,
The goat, alack, was dead.

The *moral* of this ballad,
If moral it may claim:
Boys, through the changing ages,
Have ever been the same.

I LIKE to hear big sister, when she sits 'n' thumps
th' keys,
'N' pounds th' purtiest music out, as easy as you
please;
So I'm a-takin' lessons, 'n' I've been a-learnin'
lots
About th' sharps 'n' flats 'n' notes 'n' curlicues 'n'
dots;
But I've about concluded 'at it ain't worth while t'
play
If a fellow's got t' *practice* f'r an hour ev'ry day.

Course, now, an hour don't seem long when you're
a-havin' fun;
It's over 'fore you know it, 'n' you wish't 'twas
just begun;
The hour's noon we get at school, t' spend in fun
'n' sport,
Us kids'll tell you, anytime, is twenty times too
short;
But hours stretch like rubber, till they seem a
week t' me,
When drummin' th' piano, "one, two, three" 'n'
"one, two, three."

'N' when th' time f'r practice comes, I'd rather
read a book
Er play croquet er dress my dolls er help my
mamma cook;

I'd fill th' air with music, too, jus' like a singin' bird,
But *they* start in, " tee-doodle-doo," 'thout practicin' a word;
Imagine baby bobolinks a-practicin' their notes —
W'y, music fairly chokes their lungs, 'n' gurgles fr'm their throats!

Besides, there *are* pianos 'at jus' *anyone* can play
T' sound like Paderroosky, so the advertisements say;
You pump th' pedals — pull on *this* — er mebbe push on *that* —
'N' grind th' lovely music out, as easy as say " scat "—
So good-bye, ol' piano, I'm a-go'n' t' run away,
'Fore I'll sit here 'n' pound 'n' thump an hour ev'ry day!

THE HAWK'S NEST

I'll tell you 'bout the hawk's nest 'at, las' Sunday
afternoon,
We run acrost in Grimes's woods, and climbed fer
like a coon;
Chum found it in a big ash tree — no limb fer
forty feet —
Bantered me t' climb it, an' I hated t' be beat.

He's been c'lectin' birds' eggs now, y' see, fer quite
a while —
C'menced with hen eggs, I suppose, t' end with
crocodile;
He says that kind o' hawks 'r' scarce, so suit him t'
perfection
T' rob it of its eggs, y' know, t' add t' his c'lec-
tion.

There's some folks argue, off 'n' on, how it's a sin t'
steal
Eggs fr'm th' harmless little birds, until we'd
mebbe feel
Repentant f'r an hour er so, but the next new kind
of nest
We'd run acrost was sure t' lose its contents like
the rest.

Besides, since hawks 'r' birds of prey 'n' chicken
thieves, you'd own
That it'd almost be a sin t' leave their nests *alone!*

'N' so I started up th' tree, a-knowin' all th' time
It was a lot too big 'n' tall f'r me t' try t' climb.

I'd shin up till my wind give out, then hang 'n' rest
awhile,
'N' I declare, th' last ten feet appeared t' be a
mile;
Arms 'n' legs was all s' tired that I could hardly
crawl,
And yet I darsn't start back down, f'r fear that I
'u'd fall.

So I kep' goin' towards th' top — but slow, y' un-
derstand,
An' grabbed, at last, that blessed limb in my de-
spairin' hand,
Then got my legs safe over it, by usin' all my
power,
'N' jus' hung on an' rested there f'r mighty near
an hour.

Th' rest, of course, looked easy, but I soon began
t' know
That nest was four times higher'n it looked fr'm
down below;
So I began t' climb again, not lookin' at th'
ground,
But holdin' with a tighter grip, 'n' scared at ev'ry
sound.

Would have backed out yet, I reckon, but my chum
set on a stump
'N' jus' kep' on a-hollerin', "Go on, you timid
chump!"
Y' see, he's 'most afraid t' climb a little apple
tree,
But mighty bold, down on th' ground, t' holler
things at *me!*

So I kep' on fr'm limb t' limb, afraid t' stop 'n'
rest,
Until I got jus' underneath that brushpile of a
nest,
'N' when I started t' look in, all tired, scared 'n'
scratched,
I heard a "cheep"—'n' purt' near fell — those
doggoned eggs had *hatched!*

THE PIG IN THE PARLOR

When invited to a "party," as a very little boy,
You remember how it thrilled you both with terror and with joy,
With what vast anticipation your clothes and shoes were brushed;
When at last you entered primly, with your dauntless spirit crushed,
You observed your school-day comrades, with an unfamiliar air
Of propriety, around you in straight rows were sitting there.
Then a difficulty met you, you could never understand,
For you hadn't the least idea what to do with either hand,
And then, a moment later, your confusion to complete,
You were similarly troubled as to where to put your *feet* —
Oh, you hadn't the least idea what to say or what to do,
Till you "kept the pig in the parlor and it was Irish too!"

Oh, that game was your salvation — you had felt your face grow red,
And you knew the need of rescue or you'd very soon be dead,
But by "the pig in the parlor" your spirits soon were thawed,

And mustering your courage, at last you stirred
abroad.
At first you did not join the game, but sought a
safe retreat
Where you might stow away your hands and for-
get about your feet,
And watch that ring of awkward boys and most
entrancing girls —
These last, perfection from their feet to their
beribboned curls;
And as the blessed game went on, it made your
heart rejoice
To find, by valiant effort, you were getting back
your voice.
By and by, on invitations that were freely given
you,
You " kept the pig in the parlor and it was Irish
too! "

You have doubtless been embarrassed by some
" social functions " since,
And your lack of easy manners made your troubled
spirit wince,
But never ball or banquet shall give you such
affright
Or such a terror as came o'er you on that memora-
ble night.
Some social situations may make you ill at ease,
But though your spirits may be chilled they never
more shall *freeze;*
What though your later errors may make you feel
a dunce,

Still the spirit, like the body, can only die but once.
And I ween, at later banquets, where society is thronged,
Full of formal affectations — and eternally prolonged —
You will long to see them ended, and you'll give the days their due
When " you kept the pig in the parlor and it was Irish too! "

SECRETS

I've got the biggest secret, that I'm never goin' to tell:
It started out with Mary, who told it all to Belle,
Then she told it to Nora, who passed it on to Fan;
Fan let it out to Susy, who told it all to Anne;
She whispered it to Bertha, who went and told a boy,
And course he couldn't keep it and so it got to Roy;
He told his brother Willie; from there it got to Tom —
It's a *really, truly secret,* for that's who I got it from.
And, 'course, 'cause it's a secret, I'm never goin' to tell
A soul except my sisters and my chum and seat-mate, Nell.

WHEN MR. SCREECH OWL CAME

One time a little screech owl flew
An' perched right on our barnyard gate,
An' papa said we'd see him, too,
If Mr. Screech Owl jus' would wait.

He rolled his eyes so scared at us,
Then flopped up on the corncrib door,
'N' turned around 'n' stared at us,
'N' rolled his big black eyes some more.

That night we heard a spooky noise,
An' mamma said, "The screech owl's here";
'N' how we wished that we were boys,
F'r they don't scare at things that's queer.

'N' ever since I've wondered some
Whenever I've a screech owl heard,
How such an awful noise could come
Fr'm such a funny little bird!

OUR FIRST ALMA MATER

Clear etched, we bear its image in our mind,
The counterpart of thousands of its kind —
Red brick, perched jauntily upon a hill,
And full of memories that haunt us still.
One storied was it — architecture plain —
And always with a broken window pane,
The wreckage of some ill-aimed stone or ball,
Whose havoc brought confusion to us all.
It knew no furnace heat, but had, instead,
A plain round stove, in color rusty red,—
On special days exchanged for shining black
That almost brought its look of newness back.
That stove was used for other things than heat,
By rowdy boys, who knew no greater treat
Than just to slip a cartridge on its top,
Whose bursting brought all lessons to a stop;
Or bits of rubber, slyly smuggled there,
With fearsome odors filled the schoolhouse air.
The walls were ornamented by some odds
And ends of charts — and scores of paper wads —
And scribbled up with names and bits of rhyme,
Displaying lack of sense and surplus time.
The girls each labored on an unscratched desk,
The boys on one less neat, but picturesque,
Much notched and whittled by the busy knife
That solaced all their tedious schoolday life.

There was the rostrum, where, with spirit sore,
In deep disgrace, you "stood upon the floor,"
A punishment that lost its crushing force

With many repetitions of its course.
There was the blackboard, on whose dusty face
Some dubious calculation you would trace;
Or, if the teacher seemed absorbed in talk,
You paused to throw some surreptitious chalk.
The floor, of course, was always rough and bare,
With many inkspots scattered here and there;
And still our memory shudders at the noise
Made on it by those clumsy booted boys,
Who also loved to scatter match heads there,
Which, stepped on, brought the teacher to despair.
Such was the spot, where, in the days of yore,
We added knowledge to our scanty store,
And though we know its aspect was but plain,
We seek its equal otherwheres in vain.
We may remember college days with pride
And an affection that is deep and wide,
But nearer to our hearts we find, in truth,
The little " alma mater " of our youth!

"Last week me an' my pa an' ma all went to
County Fair,
To see the animals an' things, an' all the people
there;
An' papa he gave me a dime to buy a toy balloon,
But, oh! it got away from me an' sailed off like the
moon!"

Ah, little maid, 'tis so in life, in Vanity, Vanity
Fair,—
The prizes that we strive to win, with endless toil
and care,
Like your balloon will sail away, loosed from our
careless clasp,
Or, sadder still, to ashes change, Sodom's apples
in our grasp.

"An' then there were some fortune wheels you'd
spin an' spin an' spin —
With ev'ry single one of 'em "you couldn't help
but win";
I won two gold rings when I tried, but in a week or
two
Those rings both turned a nasty green — while I
— I turned to "blue."

We grown folks have our Fortune wheels, in Van-
ity, Vanity Fair,—
From Wall street to the peddler's cart the little
tricks are there,

And schemes for gaining untold wealth, and all the games look nice,
Although, too late, we often find they're played with loaded dice.

Then we went in a sideshow there to see "THE WILDEST MAN
WAS EVER IN CAPTIVITY"— that's how the posters ran,
But when he howled an' shook his chains, pa only says, "Keep cool,
That's just an ordinary man, a-actin' like a fool."

Well, little maid, you'll find it so, in Vanity, Vanity Fair,
That many shining promises were never made to wear;
Howe'er it be in worlds to come, you will but seldom miss
To find fulfillment falling short of promises in THIS!

"An' then we rode the merry-go-round, right on a wooden horse
That pranced with reindeers 'round an' 'round, like racers on a course;
We rode, it 'peared, for miles an' miles — the engine tooted then,
An' very place that we got on, w'y, we got *off* again."

Yes, little sweetheart, even so in Vanity, Vanity Fair,
We travel at a mighty pace — and don't get anywhere;
And men and nations, yea, and worlds, through sorrow, strife and sin,
Seem rushing madly on and on — to end where they begin.

We little understand the little child,
Nor comprehend its nature, shy and wild;
And smile at all the fancies it will weave,
All prefaced by the words: "Let's make believe."
We little know the causes hid below
The childish faults that vex its elders so,
Such as the awful power that we see
But dimly, and have called "heredity"—
"Unto the fourth generation" not alone,
But stretching through the savage Age of Stone
To that dim past that knew no human shape,
When Man was but a cousin to the Ape.
The wayward "moods" of which the *parent* tells,
Seen in their *children* are reproved as "spells,"
And traits by parents frowned on are, alas,
Like mirrored visions in a looking glass.
Since understanding hearts are all too few,
And truth so often sad, as well as true,
So it is well each child should first receive
This Gift of the Divine—"Let's make believe!"

Give them their fancies, then, the brightest rift
In skies still dark enough — God's gentle gift
To little souls that soon must burdens bear
Of grim reality and haunting care.
Nor do I hold with those who point out flaws
In the reality of Santa Claus,
And scoff or jest at aught that is unfurled
To childhood by the unseen fairy world.

Nay, tell these heartless sticklers for the truth,
Who speak of telling children *lies*, forsooth!
That all mankind must comfort hearts that grieve
With words that *might* begin, "Let's make believe!"

So leave the little child its world unseen,
Nor seek to dim the brightness of its sheen;
Too soon shall they be carried by Life's stream
Beyond the borders of their childhood's dream,
And all too soon shall dawning doubt assail
Their fancies of the land "behind the veil,"
And later years seek vainly to retrieve
The vanished kingdom of "Let's make believe."

HOMEMADE CHRISTMAS POETRY

"WRITE me a Christmas piece to speak;
I've hunted and hunted for one all week"—
Such was the task that my hopeful three
Year by year have demanded of me.

For surely as cometh the season of Yule
Come "entertainments" at church and school,
And Pegasus answers, like pack mule meek,—
"Write me a Christmas piece to speak!"

Hence came these poems — we must admit,
Poor quality goods,— but a guaranteed fit;
"Made to order," and hence unique —
"Write me a Christmas piece to speak!"

Fain would mere poet and father reply
That such a demand is too great to supply,—
Only in answer they urgently shriek:
"Write me a Christmas piece to speak!"

Brain must rack to win their applause
With some quaint, new story of Santa Claus;
The spirit was willing — the flesh was weak —
"Write me a Christmas piece to speak!"

Many a Christmas has swiftly flown —
Now are the "speaking" days outgrown;
So where may bard inspiration seek,
When the Christmas "speakers" no longer speak!

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

TELL you what! I'd like to 've been
Where our Christmas times begin;
Like to've seen that shining star
That the wise men followed far.

Like to've seen that little chap,
Laughin' in his mother's lap,
That the Bible pictures show,
Years an' years an' years ago.

Christmas *now* is well enough,—
Toys an' candy an' such stuff,—
But I b'lieve I'd rather been
Where our Christmas times begin!

THE RUNAWAY REINDEERS

On Christmas eve, when we had hung our stockin's in a row,
And gone to bed to dream about old Santa Claus, you know,
But hadn't been *asleep* at *all*, when all at once a sleigh
Came jinglin' up to our front gate — I saw it plain as day —
And in the moonlight I could see old Santa's reindeer team,
Just like you see in story books — *of course* I didn't *dream!*

Then, when I heard old Santa Claus come puffin' up the roof,
I leaned 'way out of the window, and t' scare him hollered "WOOF"!
And, sir, those reindeers snorted and galloped up the road,
And broke their harness and the sleigh, and scattered all its load
Of candy, toys and Christmas gifts as far as I could see,
While Santa Claus went tumblin' down, as *mad* as *mad* could be.

Then he went tearin' up the road as fast as he could run,
While I just cried and cried to think what mischief I had done,

And thought of all the little girls and all the little boys
Who'd think that Santa'd passed 'em by, just 'cause he'd lost their toys —
And wondered, if he never more should find his team and sleigh,
If he would ever come again in his old fashioned way.

And yet I found next morning, when the sun came shining in,
The presents hangin' on the wall just like they'd always been,
And not a thing along the road or lane or anywhere
To tell about the runaway that I saw happen there;
And I've always, always wondered, since that dreadful Christmas Day,
How Santa *ever* found his toys, his reindeers and his sleigh.

THE BOY'S CANDIDATE

If all the boys like me could vote, the same as all
our pas,
The President, if you'd take note, 'u'd soon be
Santa Claus,
And while the politician men were talkin' politics,
Old Santa 'd let 'em jaw — and *then* distribute
candy sticks.
Now I can't see what good there'd be in tariffs or
free trade,—
Free *Christmas gifts*, it 'pears to me, 'u'd lay them
in the shade;
Ner I don't know just what is meant by "regu-
latin' trusts,"
But I'll make Santa President — unless my traces
busts.

I think it would be awful nice to have him always
here
Instead of keepin' him on ice f'r almost all the year,
And have a dozen Christmas's with July Fourths
between,
And we could have it so, I guess,— if we could
vote, I mean.
Pa says the women of our land 'll get the votin'
right
As soon as men all understand they'll have it or
they'll fight,

But if us boys 'at wear short pants could vote an' make the laws,
No Candydate 'u'd have a chance against old Santa Claus!

The boys and girls 'u'd cross the sea fr'm every foreign land,
They'd come so thick, I s'pose, that we'd have scarcely room to stand —
And leave their foreign kings and queens, with whoops and loud hurrahs,
F'r what old king amounts to beans, compared to Santa Claus!

A NEW BEATITUDE

"Th' Bible thays it'th 'bletheder t' give 'an t' rethieve'";
So lisped, with sure conviction, a little child of Eve;
"'N' theemth t' me, if blethedneth dependth on people givin',
'At Thanty Clauth mutht thurely be th' bletheth man a-livin'!"

WHEN SANTA WAS A BOY

The other day, my grandpa told me all about the joys
He used to have long 'go, when he and Santa Claus were boys;
"Oh," grandpa says, "he's lively yet, but he's lost half the vim
He used to have when we were young, and I run 'round with him!

"Of course the times have changed since then — now *you* make twice the noise
That children ever made when I and Santa Claus were boys;
And yet, with all your airyplanes and motor cars, the day
Ain't like when Claus and I were young and scooted in a sleigh.

"So you must make the best, I s'pose, of your newfangled toys —
They're nothin' though to ours, when I and Santa Claus were boys
We mostly made our own,— perhaps that's why my tattlin' tongue
Keeps braggin' of the days when I and Santa Claus were young!"

THE ETERNAL UNFITNESS OF THINGS

I THINK it's wrong 'at when we hang our stockin's
on the wall,
'At papa's is so awful big an' mine so awful small;
For papa, he don't want a *thing* for Christmas, so
he says,
An' I want such a lot of things they'd fill a house,
I guess!

I'll write a letter right away to send to Santa
Claus,
An' tell him since my stockin's aren't near as big
as pa's,
'At he'll find loads an' loads of room just wastin'
on the floor,
An' if he got that full 'at I could tell him where
there's *more!*

I want a go cart an' a sled, some dishes an' a
doll,—
Truth is, my wishes are as big 's my stockin's they
are *small,*
So 'at's the reason why I think it isn't right or fair
My stockin's have to be so small, while pa's have
room to spare!

HOW SANTA CLAUS MISSED HAVING A PASSENGER

I HAVE such a awful cold an' I feel so stiff an' old,
An' I tell you how it happened, if you p'omise not to scold.
I'm so stopped up in my head, I 'most wish 'at I was dead,
An' my papa an' my mamma say I oughta be in bed,—
Here it's Christmas morning, too,— it's a pretty how-de-do
To feel like you're a hundred, and — escuse me, please — ca-choo!

But I had the nicest plan — just you guess it if you can —
To play a joke on Santa Claus, the funny, fat, old man!
An' 'en to have, beside, the very nicest ride,
All 'round the world, an' course you know it's awful big an' wide;
But my scheme fell clear flat through, an' I feel so sick an' blue,
I wish it *wasn't* Christmas now — s'cuse me, ca-choo, ca-choo!

When Santa climbed our house an' went down th' flue — kersouse —
I thought of hiding in his sleigh, jus' like a little mouse;

He's so jolly an' so kind 'at I knew he wouldn't mind,
So, even if he found me, he'd not make me stay behind,
'N' I might have done it, too, 'n' be with him instead of you,
If I jus' hadn't gone to sleep — ca-choo, ca-choo, ca-choo!

So, when I was sent to bed, y'see I went, instead,
An' sat down by the window, with a pillow to my head,
An' my cap an' mittens on, for I thought 'at long 'fore dawn
Ol' Santa's sleigh 'u'd come 'n' go, then you'd find me *gone;*
An'— cross my heart it's true — the clock struck one an' two
Without a sign of Santa Claus — ca-choo, ca-choo, ca-choo!

Then next I knew I waked, f'r mamma shaked and shaked,
'N' asked me why I'm not in bed — oh my goodness — how I ached!
My legs were both asleep, fr'm layin' in a heap,
An' th' sun seemed laughin' at me, an'— good gracious — I felt cheap,
For I guess 'at you would too, if you waked like that, an' knew
That Santa's sleigh had come an' gone — ca-choo, ca-choo, ca-choo!

I feel as though I'd freeze, 'n' I'm shakin' at the knees,
'N' I know 'at when I go to school the kids'll tease an' tease,
A-askin' how I like to go sleighin' down the pike,
Perched in a sleigh with Santa Claus, an' thinkin' 'at I'm Mike.
Here it's Christmas mornin', too, an' mamma's gone t' brew
Some nasty stuff f'r me t' drink — ca-choo, *ca-choo,* CA-CHOO!

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

Pa says the Christmas spirit's easier caught than
whoopin' cough,
You only get it harder if you try to keep it off;
You almost love your en'mies, though you'd really
rather not,
While as for friends and kindred, you could hug
'em on the spot.

You get it every season, more reg'lar than the grip,
And *that* don't miss you often, but this gets you
every trip;
You keep on buyin' presents every time you pass
a store,
Till the last day before Christmas — when you go
and buy some *more!*

It's the only pleasant illness, from the smallpox
to the chills,
But you suffer a reaction, when you go to pay the
bills;
But there ain't no use in dodgin'— it's easier
caught than mumps,
And the more you fight against it, the harder are
your bumps.

A MESSAGE TO SANTA CLAUS

Deer santy claus
i want som candy plese
pa says ime fond of suggar as the bees
i want a little tabble an som chares
an a fur cap like susy simkins wares
ide like som candy santy an a muff
an if you think this isent quite enuff
plese bring me a peano i can play
but bring me som more candy anyway.
santy my techer says youre just a mith
santy whats that
yoors truley
bessie smith

p S
santy if you just coodent bring this all
bring me a lot of candy an a doll.

AN AWFUL THOUGHT

I'm worried, *awful* worried, since, a year ago
to-day
I saw old Santa Claus himself, who looked so old
and gray,
That I've been wond'rin' ever since just how and
when and why
The presents would get taken 'round if Santa was
to die.

It must be dreadful hard on him, a-drivin' here and
there,
And hoppin' in and out his sleigh all night this time
of year;
He'd hate to go to doct'rin', *now*, when business is
so thick —
I'd like to know where I'd come in if Santa should
get sick.

So I'm worried, awful worried, since a year ago
to-day,
When I saw Santa at our church, and I just want
to say
That what us kids 'u'd like to know is, who's he
goin' to hire
To take his place among the toys, and drive his
"Reindeer Flyer"?

DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING EARLY

I've jostled through a crowd for hours, where every one is hurried,
And half the folks look angry and all of them look worried;
We madly rush from store to store — they're full to overflowing,
And when I'll get my shopping done, the Lord alone is knowing;
I would I had a giant's strength and figure big and burly,
For I am one who failed to do my Christmas shopping early.

And when I get inside a store, and think my woe's abating,
I find that it has just begun, and stand for ages waiting;
By thoughts of the elapsing hours my mind is sorely haunted,
So when my turn arrives I've quite forgotten what I wanted;
Nor does it comfort me to find that clerks are always surly
And cross with folks who fail to do their Christmas shopping early.

So what the salesman hands me out I buy without refusing;
Where only Hobson's choice is left, what use is there in choosing?

And when my shopping's over, I would call high
Heaven to witness
That every gift I've chosen is a marvel of unfitness;
So I'll heed the words of wisdom — they are
golden, they are pearly,—
And when NEXT Yuletide comes, I'll do my Christ-
mas shopping early!

WHERE WAS SANTA CLAUS?

Being a small boy's comment on the discovery of the North Pole.

I HEARD the grown folks talk an' talk 'bout Peary
an' Doc Cook,
But I take mighty little stock in the trouble that
they took.
They didn't find a thing but ice, for all the loud
applause —
I'd like to ask them once or twice, " Say, where
was Santa Claus? "

I can't see any earthly use, them frostin' up their
toes,
An' wearin' out their rawhide shoes among the
Eskimos;
For when they got up to the Pole, they never
'peared to pause
To ask themselves, " Upon my soul, now where is
Santa Claus? "

So when they try to prove they got up there with
all their traps,
Their observations an' what not, an' all their notes
an' maps,
No matter what the wise men say, I'll not believe
'em 'cause
They make no mention, anyway, of seein' Santa
Claus!

SANTA CLAUS AND THE CLIMATE

When it's Christmas and Thanksgivin', it's chilly here, we own,
Still I wouldn't fancy livin' down in the torrid zone;
They may talk about their roses, bloomin' outdoors everywhere,
And us with frosted noses, and our trees and bushes bare,
But when I see the holly and the ice a-sparklin' so,
I think it's lots more jolly to be where there is snow.
'N' aside fr'm other reasons, I like our winters 'cause
I don't believe hot seasons agree with Santa Claus!

I can't 'magine him a-drivin' his reindeers an' his sleigh
Where vines an' flowers are thrivin', the year around, they say;
I can't think of him a-goin' where naked heathens swarm,
With his fur clothes, an' knowin' that it's so awful warm.
I've noticed by his pictures that he is round an' fat,
An' those fur clothes are fixtures — there's no disputin' *that;*

So I haven't any cravin' t' dress in suits of gauze —
Go where the palms are wavin'— I'll stay with Santa Claus!

Wouldn't fancy always stayin' among the Eskimos,
Without a chance for playin' in my bare feet, I s'pose;
I like hot summer weather, an' th' fun 'at it can bring,—
Like all kinds mixed together in April, 'cause it's *Spring;*
'N' I haven't no objections to 'bout three months of *Fall* —
It don't need no corrections, an' of course I like it all —
But bring on, in December, yer freezes an' yer thaws,
With lots of snow, remember, f'r me an' Santa Claus!

A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

'Long just about December first, Pa says, "You
can depend,
When Christmas comes 'round this year, we ain't
a-goin' t' spend
As much as we did last year," says he, "an' I don't
keer
If Christmas, as the people say, 'does comes but
once a year.'"

Then 'bout December twenty-third, they both went
in a shop,
And folks were buyin' everywhere, like they's never
goin' t' stop,
And then, said Pa, "Maria, it's the season of good
cheer —
We might as well be lib'ral, Christmas comes but
once a year!"

But on next New Year's mornin', when rememberin'
what he's spent,
And yet a-sorto' puzzlin' where the deuce the
money went,
Pa says, "Maria, I have made *one* good resolve,
don't fear;
We're not a-goin' to spend so much for Christmas
gifts, next year."

THE MISTAKES OF SANTA CLAUS

Of Kriss Kringle's virtues we hear, goodness sakes,
But seldom hear mentioned his frequent mistakes,
Just because we all love the jolly old soul
Who loafs all the rest of the year at the Pole.

But when he leaves balls for the boys he may pass,
He should give their fond mothers unbreakable glass;
And when he gives foot balls to boys like Jim Jones,
He should give them full sets of unbreakable bones.

Nor should he give candy and cookies and cake
Unless followed by something to cure stomach ache,
Or ever give whistles and drums to the boys
Without adding attachments to muffle their noise.

Nor should he make presents of jewels, 'tis plain,
To young ladies, already unreasonably vain,
Or offer pianos — alas, there's the rub —
To girls whose worst need is a washboard and tub.

Yet I'm certain the saddest of all the mistakes
Santa Claus on his annual pilgrimage makes,
Is to give fewer gifts to the needy and poor
And more to the rich, who don't need them, that's sure.

But in spite of the errors of judgment he makes,
We love Santa Claus, with all his mistakes,
And wait for his coming all through the long year,
And sing for pure gladness that Christmas is here.

Talk of your entertainments! Well, I've gone to
ten or more,
But none of them were half so swell as ours at
Number Four,
Though some, of course, had Christmas trees and
Santa Claus and such,
All rigged up fancy as you please, but really noth-
ing much.

We have some songs and dialogues — and they're
just loads of fun —
You dress up in the grown folks' togs, and act like
you were one;
But oh, the "speaking"! Why, my Pa, he doesn't
ever cease
To argue it should be the law *no* child should speak
a "piece."

You know how little children speak — they sorto'
hang their head,
And you might listen for a week and not hear half
they said;
They grind out noble sentiments like they were
some machine,
Without regard to sound or sense — you know
just what I mean.

Then Pa quotes what the Scriptures say about
" Thou shalt not kill ";
Says he, " What happens Christmas Day? Just
answer if you will!
Child after child of tender age goes forth in
trembling fear
And murders poems on the stage, with none to
interfere! "

For instance, now, there's Janey Blair, a darling
little miss,
Who sings her pieces, I declare, to some such tune
as this:
" OhChristmasDaywillsoonbehere,
Thegladdestseasonoftheyear,
WhenSantaClausbringsgiftsandtoys
Toallgoodlittlegirlsandboys."

Then Susie Simpkins toddles out, and says, with
lisping tongue,
The piece we're all so proud about — for Susie's
awful young —
" If Than ty C'auth'eth team runned off,
I'd love tothop'em, wouldn't you?
'Nd I'd keep all th' toyth my thelf,
'Nd eat up all th' candy toooo! "

Then Tom Smith has a piece that tells about a
burning house —
The cry of " FIRE! " that Tommy yells sounds like
a squeaking mouse;

Tom's voice is strong enough at play, but gets amazing weak
And faint on Recitation Day, when his turn comes to speak.

Jim Jones's piece is cute, I guess, but then he snickers so —
What it's about, I must confess, I never hope to know —
And since our notions of his piece are somewhat dull and dim,
We all sit back and laugh like geese — not at the *piece*, but HIM!

Sam Dix went fine until he reached an extra thrilling spot,
And then some little baby screeched — and Samyel, he forgot —
So, many precious future hours, I know I'll vainly spend
In puzzling out how, by the Powers, that piece of his could end.

But Betty Green — the little dear, no bigger than a bird —
Speaks out so loud and plain and clear you never miss a word,
And natural as life, you know, and you'll believe, perhaps,
When *she* gets through and starts to go, Pa claps and *claps* and CLAPS!

And, since there isn't any law forbidding kids to speak,
I'm here myself, in spite of Pa, to make my little squeak,
And wish you all, you understand, before we go away,
A very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year's Day!

A PREMATURE DISCOVERY

I KNOW the biggest secret, since a week or two ago,
I'm sure you'll not drop any hints to anyone you know,—
But I was hunting on a shelf, above our attic stairs,
And't looked like Santa Claus, himself, had been there unawares.

I've not discovered, even yet, the thing I hunted for,
But what I *did* find there, you bet, was somepin' pleased me more;
There was a little bureau there, and jus' the sweetest doll,—
I was so tickled, I declare, I almost let it fall!

There was a dolly's go-cart, too, and lots of picture books,
A money-bank, all painted blue, a rollin' pin like cook's,
And best of all — it s'prised me so I almost fell, ker-plunk —
The cutest dolly clothes, you know, in jus' the sweetest trunk.

Then I crawled down and ran away, and hopped and skipped, I did,
And never breathed it till to-day, where all those things were hid;

Of course I wouldn't tell it now to anyone but you,
You mus'n't breathe it, anyhow, but cross my
heart, it's true!

My parents mus'n't know I found those things at
all, because
They want to fool me, I'll be bound, about old
Santa Claus,
So when I see them Christmas Day, I'll open up
my eyes
As though I don't know what to say, I feel so much
surprise.

AN AFTER CHRISTMAS LAMENT

It's lots of fun when Christmas Day is still
a-comin' yet,
And you're a-buyin' things for folks, an' wond'rin'
what you'll *get;*
But now it isn't half so nice, for Christmas time is
past,
And 'pears like all the toys I got were just too
nice to last!

My nice new dolly that could talk will scarcely
even squeak;
Pa says its lungs is failin' fast — I've had it but
a week;
My patent top won't spin no more — it was the
mostest fun;
My train of cars are just the same — I just can't
make 'em run.

I've et my Christmas candy up — don't want it
anyhow;
Seems like there's nothin' I can eat that tastes
half decent now;
And Ma's dosed me on castor oil an' liver pills an'
such
Till I declare, ef I should die, I wouldn't mind it
much!

So, while it's nice when Christmas Day is still
a-comin' yet,
An' you're a-thinkin' what you *want*, an' wond'rin'
what you'll *get*,
But now that it has come and gone my pleasure
sort o' leaks,
To think it won't be here again for more than forty
weeks!

FROM FURROW AND FIELD

Spring has waked old Earth from sleeping, so at
last my plow is creeping
At its labors, and there's music in the field,
For the angry killdeer's scolding, for the plodding
plow I'm holding
Means danger to the nest she has concealed.

There are swallows swiftly diving just ahead of
where I'm driving,
Where a feast of flitting insects they shall find;
While the glossy blackbirds scatter, with a world
of saucy chatter,
For their dinner in the furrow just behind.

Slowly on my plowshare burrows, turning one by
one the furrows
That shall open to the sun the mellow soil,
And my spirit, as I follow, grows as lightsome as
the swallow —
For plowing is Contentment masked as Toil!

And we dream of harvest's coming, when the
reapers will be humming,
And bring the full fruition of the yield;
First the sowing, then the gleaning — there lies
half Life's hidden meaning —
A sermon from the furrow and the field!

PLOWING

Our tastes are apt to differ 'bout th' things we
like to do —
An' what I think most pleasant may seem a bore
to you —
But no other work I tackle can suit me, anyhow,
Like when th' ground gets mellow an' I'm startin'
in to plow!

It keeps y'r body busy, but y'r mind's left free to
roam;
Y'r feet plod in th' furrow, but y'r spirit's not at
home,
An' I reckon that's th' reason, as I'm sayin' to
you now,
That of all th' kinds of workin', it suits me best
to plow.

Sometimes y'r mind is musin' on what's past for
forty year,
Sometimes it's in th' future — oh, it's anywhere
but *here;*
You've as fine a chance for thinkin' as you'll ever
have, I vow,
When y'r mind starts out to wander while y'r'
followin' th' plow!

You have no one by to bother — you're serenely
all alone —
Though y'r thoughts are interrupted when y'r
plowpoint strikes a stone,

But I'm gener'ly as happy as a bluebird on a bough
When the ground gets warm an' mellow, an' I'm startin' out to plow.

"FARMER'S INSTITOOT"

Excitement's rising ev'rywhere, all through our neighborhood,
Almost as though the County Fair had settled there for good.
Now in the city, I suppose, where lots of things occur,
Such things grow tiresome, goodness knows, and make but little stir;
But where we know our neighbors all, and their affairs, to boot,
You'll find the interest is not small in "Farmer's Institoot."

For here we dig our daily bread from the sweet smelling soil,
Or change it into gold, instead, by alchemy of toil;
And here the dweller in the town, when on the street he stops,
From minister and banker down, will ask about the crops,
And even the editor longs to learn of hogs and cows and fruit,
And hails with joy the glad return of "Farmer's Institoot."

Bring forth your knotty problems, then, whose answers you would know,
Or that may to your fellowmen your weighty wisdom show;

Pour forth the knowledge that for years your
intellect has stored —
But kindly stop when it appears the audience is
bored;
Let all the errors of the past be dug out, branch
and root,—
Upon this mission comes at last the " Farmer's
Institoot."

If in our farming, then, to-day, we'd keep up with
the crowd,
We find, as railroad tickets say, " no stop-over
allowed,"
And that the methods Adam used in Eden's realms
of bliss,
Which, in his day, might be excused, would never
do in this;
Our fathers did the best they could — let this no
man dispute
Who has, to help him to make good, the "Farmer's
Institoot."

Then let us hail the Institoot, its talks on cows
and corn,
How we may teach sheep not to root, and how
hogs should be shorn,
How we should bring our children up — or some-
times " take them down "—
With brimming plenty fill our cup, and also feed
the town;

For aid in all these many ways, we here and now salute,
With words of gratitude and praise, the "Farmer's Institoot!"

A SIGN OF SPRING

There are many signs and symptoms to show
when spring is here,
And some, like "early robins," are but false
alarms, I fear,
But I feel a glad assurance that we're done with
winter's yoke
When I hear the bass and tenor of the Bull Frog
Chorus croak.

Their music ever fills my heart with a resistless
joy,
Such unlimited rapture as is given to a boy;
So for me no sweeter music ever yet the silence
broke
Than to hear the hoarse musicians of the Bull
Frog Chorus croak.

All life seems just beginning to bud and bloom
anew,
The sun shines bright and cheery and the sky
grows soft and blue;
Let me idly watch while summer swiftly dons her
emerald cloaks,
And hark to winter's requiem, as the Bull Frog
Chorus croaks!

WHEN I GET TO THINKIN'

Sometimes I get to thinkin', say when evenin's
comin' on,
And I've mebbe been a-plowin' ever since the early
dawn,—
Till a crowd of recollections seem to take me back
as plain
To my childhood — *second*, mebbe, leastways I'm
a child again.

I can see the old red schoolhouse, back among the
maple trees,
'Long about in early summer, and even the bumble
bees,
Too lazy-like to even sting, were jus' a-buzzin'
low —
Th' day too hot for boys to play or even grass to
grow!

Doggone! Wish't I was back there with a crowd
of onery boys
With th' same old desp'ret longin' f'r mischief an'
f'r noise.
By the schoolhouse was a sawmill, where we'd fool
with wheels and belts,
An' not quit f'r wrathful owners, ner school bells
ner *nothin' else!*

I remember that old sawmill jus' as well as yester-
day,
An' what a boy's heaven it used t' be f'r play —

Jus' t' scramble up its timbers till our brains jus' whirls an' whirls,
Then go out into th' log yard an' play woodtag with th' girls!

Queer! But when I get to thinkin' how all them 'at used t' play
In th' old sawmill together are scattered now, to-day,
An' growed apart an' altered an'— by gracious! *gettin' old!*
An' nothin' left of th' old mill but a little moss an' mold,

Makes a feller kind o' lonesome-like an' sort o' feel his age
'N' realize how far he's gone in this world's pilgrimage —
I reckon, though, there ain't no use in wastin' time in sighs,
But howsoever, I do feel some damp about th' eyes.

Still, I often get to thinkin' 'at when this earth's cares are gone,
A better world'll take the place of the one we're travellin' on;
Take, f'r instance, in th' twilight, when you go out to the bars,
An' look up fr'm this world's shadders to th' everlasting stars.

Seems t' make this globe we're standin' on seem
most almighty small,
Yet broadens out a man's idees an' fancies, after
all;
Then you start home through th' twilight, fireflies
sparklin' ev'rywhere,
With y'r own fireside a-shinin' and y'r wife to meet
you there.

NOONTIME IN HARVEST

I s'pose that no two minds agree in views of Paradise —
You'd have a different heaven from me — we differ otherwise;
But my idee, I'll tell you soon, if it could come to pass,
Is just filled up by harvest noon — to flatten on the grass
And squint up at the cloudless sky through holes in y'r straw hat,
With kind o' dreamy, half shut eye — but wide awake, at that!

With whiffs of dryin' clover hay a-fillin' all the air,
Fresh from the fields, as though to say that you were needed there;
The raincrow hollerin' f'r rain, and ev'ry maple leaf
Turned upside down, to make it plain y'r noonin' should be brief.
The things we shouldn't have, you know, are sweetest to the taste,
Hence our First Parents, long ago, that "fruit" devoured in haste.

So, while we may not all agree in views of Paradise,
I'll take, for *mine*, a shady tree and lay with half shut eyes,

Just dreamin' of the days when that was all I had
to do —
To blink up through my old straw hat — and
tired of it, too!
And yet, that clover smell at last brings to my
mind, to-day,
The time f'r dozin' here is past — we must be
makin' hay!

WHEN FRUIT TREE AGENTS COME

When fruit tree agents come, even Eloquence grows dumb,
As they display their colored plates of apple, peach or plum;
It was thus, as I conceive, that the Serpent tempted Eve —
He had some colored plates along, I verily believe;
So I never fail to buy, though I always wonder why,
For though I plant with loving care, the blame things always die!

I behold each colored plate, then succumbing to my fate,
I order with an ardor disappointment can't abate;
For those master works of art do so fascinate my heart,
As the cheerfulest of martyrs with my money I will part;
That I get but little fruit is, I fear, beyond dispute,
Yet when I see those colored plates my common sense is mute.

I have planted trees for years, I have watered them with tears,
But they have never borne such fruit as on those plates appears;
So I fear that it is true peach or plum of rainbow hue

Will never in this world of woe appear upon my view,
And that I shall find a dearth, on this disappointing earth,
Of fruits that may compare with them in gaudiness and girth.

There are times when I surmise that those plates of colored lies
Much of our life experience may seem to symbolize;
Even so we turn our glance, from the rainbows of Romance,
To somber hued Reality, and look at it askance,
And the plans we plant with care and whose future seemed so fair
Are strangely disappointing in the fruit they come to bear.

But when fruit tree agents come, though at first I'm grim and glum,
When I behold those colored plates I sullenly succumb;
It was thus, as I conceive, that the Serpent tempted Eve —
I feel her disappointment, and in sympathy I grieve;
And my spirit sorely sighs for some perfect paradise,
Where the fruit tree agent's pictures may grow real before my eyes!

TWO POINTS OF VIEW

My city cousin thinks it's fine
To listen to the "lowing kine,"
But farmers, I can tell you now,
All hate to hear a *bawlin' cow!*

She talks about "the dewy mead"—
That does sound pretty nice, indeed,
Till you remember all that gas
Is just about a *field* of *grass!*

She raves about "the lovely rocks"
That lie about my fields in flocks,
And says they make enchanting "scenes"—
They're mighty hard on my machines!

She says she daily praises God
For "giving her the golden rod"—
If she had all those *weeds* to *mow*
She'd wish He hadn't let 'em grow!

She "loves the little brooklet's charm"—
It cuts the best part of my farm;
If by that "brooklet" she should plow,
She'd wish it wasn't there, I vow.

No modern houses catch her eye,
But when some run down shack she'll spy,
She'll gather up her paints and brush,
And paint and paint — and *gush* and *gush!*

The farm scenes that appeal to *me*
She never even seems to see,
And every picture she'll commence
Is full of weeds and old rail fence.

For she's an artist and her *art*
And *common sense* are far apart —
My good old motto always was
That "handsome is that handsome does!"

ÆSTHETICS ON THE FARM

Us farmers in the country cannot live on pretty
views,
Yet I'm thankful for the beauty in the common
things we use;
So I joy in the greenness of the grass and trees
in spring,
And am tickled as the children when the birds
begin to sing.

So I often think the fruit trees, with their load of
snowy bloom,
If that were all they ever bore, would be no waste
of room,
And that the wavin', golden fields of yellow ripened
grain,
If only good to look at, would not quite have
grown in vain.

I am thankful for the colors of the forests in the
fall,
With the haze of Indian Summer sort of dreaming
over all,
And I like to see the blanket of white and gleaming
snow
That old Winter spreads down softly when all
other beauties go.

And if God put grace and beauty in such things
as harmful weeds,

I'm glad he left a little for the things that fill our needs,
And that while He put the rainbow in the shower's shining drops,
They can also put the color in us farmers' growing crops.

Let the rich man in the city the high toned paintings buy —
Not one of them can equal the sunset in the sky
That the Master Artist colors, for all who care to see,—
So the Almighty's works of art are good enough for me.

So I see no use in pining for the beauties man has made,
Since Nature's works are free to all — and lay them in the shade;
Though we can't exist entirely on scenery and views,
Let's be thankful for the beauty in the common things we use!

STRAY REMARKS BY WILLIAM

ON BANQUETS

Bill says f'r stylish banquets *he* sends in his excuses —
They strike him as too fancy f'r common peoples' uses;
So if you'll please excuse him, when th' eatin' comes in courses,
He'll slip out to th' stable 'n' take *his* meals with th' horses.

ON "THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN"

Bill says you'll go through Heaven's Gate
Ahead of some th' world calls great
If you'll just treat y'r neighbors white
'N' always keep y'r traces tight.

ON EGOTISM

You'll seldom find th' men who boast
'N' brag are those who *do* th' most —
Ten times t' one th' chap makes good
Who shuts his mouth 'n' saws th' wood!

ON MODERN LITERATURE

Bill says our readin' nowadays, he thinks, is mostly slop,—
Words poured in by the bar'l — sense put in by th' drop —
A fraction of an inch of beer — a foot of froth on top.

ON PROFANITY

S'pose that cussin's wicked —
S'pose it's wrong t' slam
At th' doors an' mutter
An explosive "——!"

Do not doubt it's sinful —
Still, I think it serves
As a sort o' *safety valve*
F'r a man with nerves.

ON WOMANKIND

S'pose there's nothin' equals, jus' take 'em altogether
As interestin' topics, th' women an' th' weather,—
They're both so sort o' flighty an' uncommon fond of flirtin',
W'en you think you understand 'em's w'en you find 'em most uncertain!

ON MAN'S RELATIONS WITH HIS CREATOR

Bill says some folks think they know oceans more
'Bout their Creator 'n' His wise intents
Than they do 'bout their neighbor, jus' nex' door,—
Which looks t' him like plain irreverence.

He says th' image of th' First Great Cause —
S' vast th' wise have sought t' grasp in vain —
Who rules th' Universe with changeless laws,
Won't fit inside a two by seven brain!

'N' if to us th' privilege He should grant,
To watch mankind fr'm far up in th' skies,
They'd look a trifle smaller than th' ant,
An' mighty similar, mebbe, otherwise.

THE CROSSROADS

The country crossroads! How it lingers still
In memory, as humdrum places will.
Its four roads to our youthful eyes unfurled
Led to the utmost ends of all the world;
What though the iron signboards, pointing down,
Merely directed to some nearby town,
We knew those roads their course would onward wend
Forever more, and never find an end.
They always beckoned us to venture forth,
No matter where, East, West or South or North.
We longed to follow them, as children must,
Inheriting the primal Wanderlust,
Wherefore we envied every gypsy camp,
And all but envied even the homeless tramp.
'Tis true that many crossroads mark the miles
Of our long journey to the afterwhiles,
But this, the first my barefoot youth had known,
Shall ever seem peculiarly my own.
A giant locust grew there in its pride,
And cast its grateful shadows far and wide;
Upon its trunk were countless tacks and nails,
Mementos left by many "Public Sales";
Above were signboards — somewhat old and brown —
To point the way to every nearby town,
But these had drawn so many marksmen's lead
That, latterly, they scarcely could be read.
Nearby, in those beloved days of yore,
A monster sign of some old clothing store

Became the target of our boyish aim,
So clods or snowballs often hid the name.
That sign would seldom fail to leave the scene
Upon the joyous night of Hallowe'en.
Old crossroads! We have sought you in the snow,
On passing bobsleds, in the long ago,
And sought you in the summer's heat and drouth,
With panting breath and dust encircled mouth,
Then dashed on madly shuffling in the dust,
To personate a railroad train, I trust —
But stopping very quickly, with a groan,
When our bare feet have met a hidden stone.
No more upon thy roads I'm faring on,
And all the landmarks of my youth are gone,
For in these latter days, with taste depraved,
They've graded down thy slopes and thou art
paved!
The signboards and the sign alike are gone,
Even as the snowballs that we "pasted" on,
But I shall carry to my last abode
The loving memory of the old Crossroad!

AN OLD TIMER'S FIRE

I ALWAYS liked a fire like that,
That you can see as well as feel —
It never did just strike me pat
To have my fire caged in steel.

A fireplace, wide, and made of brick,
With big black chimney up above —
That makes a fire a man can stick
His feet up to, and sort o' love.

If we could have a spinnin' wheel,
And Sary here to make it hum,
My old heart would begin to feel
It *was* old times — or Kingdom come!

The old things, though, are dead and gone,
And nary one is left, to-day,
But my old feet still travellin' on
By my old fire, the old-time way.

WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN

The kind of verse that makes James Whitcomb "Riley"

I REMEMBER, in th' days gone by, we us' to play
an' play,
A-gettin' into mischief jest th' whole indurin' day,
An' fillin' up th' pump with sand er scatterin' th'
wheat,
Er tormentin' ev'ry dog 'n' cat that we 'u'd chance
to meet,
An' p'tendin' we was piruts er lawless Indian chiefs,
Which was th' grandest things on earth — at least
in our beliefs;
But we'd alluz feel so sorry-like, when evenin' come
around,
Fer we allus had t' go t' bed
When
The
Sun
Went
Down.

An' wunst we went a-fishin', to be back at supper
time,
With some partin' admonishens not t' drownd our-
selves, ner climb
Fer birds-nests, ner to lose ourselves by goin' off
too far;
At last we started down th' crick t' where them
sicamores are,
'N' watched th' sun awhile 'n' wished 'at he'd turn
off th' steam,

'N' jest set still awhile, like us, an' watch th' lazy
stream;
Then first we knowed, a little star was laughin' like
a clown,
But *we* felt awful bad, that time,
When
The
Sun
Went
Down!

But things changed some, an' I declare, there
growed up, by 'n' by,
A sort of friendship 'twixt th' evenin' hours an'
I —
I'd watch th' sunset, with its heaps of purple, red
'n' gold,
But with a diff'rent feelin' fr'm th' one I had of
old;
I'd fancy they was castles, th' big clouds 'at I
'u'd see,
'N' wish they'd sometime be th' home of — *some-
one else* 'n' me —
Then, when there was a spellin' bee er party, I'll
be boun',
I wasn't sorry, no *sirree*,
When
The
Sun
Went
Down.

Them happy days are dead 'n' gone, an' I can only say
I wouldn't mind so much t' pass eternity thataway;
Yet I've been happy mostly sence an' surely can't complain,
'N' with my share o' sunshine'll take my share o' rain,
But, nowadays, I watch th' sun, fer th' most part t' tell
When, in the common run o' things, I'll hear th' dinner bell,
While in th' evenin, though I ain't th' laziest man in town,
Yet I don't mourn s' *very much*
When
The
Sun
Goes
Down.

I us' to be ambishus, but I ain't so any more,
'N' don't care much fer riches, though I'd rather not be pore,
'N' fame er power haven't got much influence with me —
Although I own I'd rather like t' be township trustee.
I think, sometimes, about th' best 'at any man can do,
At least a ordinary man, about like me er you,

Is jest t' see a few true friends in sorrow gathered
roun'
To brighten up th' hour of death
When
His
Sun
Goes
Down!

YET ONE MORE YEAR

Seems only just a week ago, or scarce a year, at least,
A homeless, friendless sort of chap came out here from back East —
That chap was me, and in those days, I tell you now I guess
That as for this world's riches, one couldn't have much less;
I met a farmer needing help, and then my way seemed clear,
And I told him if things suited, perhaps I'd stay a year.

Well, the days and weeks and months all seemed to go a-sliding past,
I'd never thought that time could fly half so amazin' fast;
The woods's turned from green to gold and then got bare and brown,
And, 'fore you'd time to mourn for 'em, the snow came siftin' down;
The boss then came around and said, "you'd better stay right here,"
To which I answered promptly that I'd stay another year.

Folks all said that he had bank stock and owned a dozen farms,
And he had a sweetfaced daughter, with twice that many charms,

And she was rich — I don't mean money, but as
all good women are,—
In faith and love and duty, changeless as the
Northern Star;
And when we married — since at home her duty's
path lay clear —
I laughed and said I reckoned I must stay another
year.

Ah me! How long the shadows of Life's afternoon
have grown!
I am sitting in its evening shades — thank heaven,
not alone!
For I watch a white haired woman as her busy
fingers fly,
And see the same sweet face I knew in the days so
long gone by;
And when the final summons of Death's messenger
I hear,
I expect I'll answer faintly, "Let me stay yet one
more year!"

WILD FLOWERS

I LOVE the flowers that grow in pots,
Or bloom along our garden walks,
Like pansies and forget-me-nots,
Geraniums and hollyhocks.

I love 'em — but with no such love
As I remember, when a child,
I felt as I would bend above
The forest flowers, growing wild

In green and fresh leaved timberlands
And stumpy " clearings," oozing wet,
Where, fairly leaping to our hands,
Bloomed many a little violet.

We called them " johnny-jump-ups " then,
A name that shamed their modest blue,
While the spring beauties of the glen
Were " daisies," then, to me and you.

We gathered that evangel, " Jack,"
In his green " pulpit " preaching there,
And kept his onion rootlet back
Wherewith some guileless youth to snare.

The dogwood's sprays of waxen white
Their snowy glories would unfold,
And swamps grow golden to our sight
With acres of marsh marigold.

Here, lending fragrance to the air,
Sweet Williams showed their pallid blue;
With lace-like leaves beside them there
Great clumps of " bachelor's breeches " grew.

Before our ruthless hands they'd fall —
We had a miser's thoughtless greed,
Nor thanked the Mother of us all
For being lavish with her seed.

Here plucked a flower — there a fern —
Not yet the lust of conquest stilled,
Nor would our footsteps homeward turn
Until our tired hands were filled.

We gave the product of our toils
To some fair sweetheart of our youth,
Who shyly praised our woodland spoils —
And they were beautiful, in truth,

She took them with unstudied grace,
That little mistress of our heart,
And gazed at them with thoughtful face,
And then — she took them all apart.

We thought them beautiful before —
She sorted them and rearranged;
Ah, then what loveliness they wore —
They were the same, yet oh how changed!

Today I find these faded flowers,
Pressed with some withered autumn leaves —
So mingled are our April showers
With Winter's death and Summer's sheaves.

WHEN THE "SIGN" IS RIGHT

THERE's folks who don't believe in "signs," but as
fer me, I do;
Ef you only take 'em rightly they allus come
true: —
Fer instance, when yer fishin', ef the fish don't
bite,
You kin count on it fer certain that the sign ain't
right.

You mus' allus plant yer taters when the sign is
in the heart,
Fer ef you don't they'll rot an' blight an' go wrong
from the start.
I see some folks are plantin' corn, but ef you look
tonight
You'll find out that the phases of the moon ain't
right.

Besides, it's goin' to rain all week, an' so without
a doubt
The corn that they're a-plantin' 'll just drowned
out.
How do I know? My goodness sakes! It's just
as plain as plain,
When the moon's turned over, w'y it can't hold
rain!

There's a sign fer killin' thistles an' it never
fails,—

You cut 'em when the sign is right an' they're dead
as nails;
But cut 'em when it *isn't*, an' you'll find it so,
It sorto' stimmylates 'em an' makes 'em grow!

There's folks who laugh at "powwowin'" fer peo-
ple that are sick,
But ef you do it rightly it'll do the trick —
A man must tell a woman, an' a woman tell a man,
An' *then* if it don't cure you, w'y there's nothin'
can!

They "powwowed" Mattie's baby when it had the
flesh decay,
An' it was just surprisin', it got better right
away;
Of course I know the doctors laugh, an' say it
isn't so,
But I maintain there's lots of things that *they*
don't know!

So ef the luck's agin you as you go along,
You kin put it down as certain that the sign's been
wrong;
Yer crops are certain sure to rot an' rust an'
blast an' blight
Unless you do yer workin' when the sign's just
right.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

Lights and shadows! Weirdly wrought,
Interlaced and strangely blended
In our lives and ending not
Till our little journey's ended.

Lights of virtue — shades of sin —
Woven through all things, and jumbled;
The Great Weaver wrought them in,—
May we own them and be humbled.

Neither seek out overmuch
To distinguish and appraise them,
He Who knows what made them such
In His truer balance weighs them.

Lights of pleasure — shades of pain —
Each a blessing to be heeded,
Even so both sun and rain
For the rainbow's hues are needed.

Lights and shadows intertwined,
Forming thus Life's strange mosaic;
Blended ever so we find
The sublime and the prosaic.

Lights and Shadows! These make Life
Good and evil oddly shuffled —
Peace attained through bitter strife
When the cannon's roar is muffled.

You, whose hands have taken up
Every prize we struggle after,
Know the sweet and bitter cup,
Unshed tears and lilting laughter.

You, who know Earth's wealth and woe,
And, in part, their hidden meaning —
Take these lights and shades I show,
May you find them worth the gleaning!

IT IS NOT GOOD THAT MAN SHOULD BE ALONE

His wife felt highly honored by a call to represent
Her Club at State Convention — need I remark,
she went?
And when she took the homeward track, her stay
was far from short;
The Club expected — and received — a quite de-
tailed " Report."
She told of essays and debates and speeches by the
score —
The story was a sea of words, without a friendly
shore.
What of her husband, all the while — did nothing,
then, occur
To him, poor humble mortal, when so much trans-
pired with her?
He occupied the background, his role was darkly
dim,
And hence I offer to the world this brief " report "
on him!

. . . .

On returning from the depot, to find himself alone,
He spent a busy hour at his faithful telephone,
In inviting all his cronies to a little stag affair —
" A high old time, remember, and be sure that you
are there."
Well, they " came and saw and conquered "— not
a wife was there to vex,—
And departed — after midnight — and talk about
your wrecks!

Why, an earthquake and a cyclone and a flood all rolled in one
Might give some faint conception of the damage that was done!
When he gets up in the morning — and, of course, he oversleeps —
He doesn't feel like working much — but work lies 'round in heaps;
The furniture seems dusty, it's a crying sin and shame,
For anywhere he touches he can autograph his name;
But he's hungry, direly hungry, so he builds a roaring fire,
And in the process piles the dirt a little fraction higher.
Thinks he, "I'll bake potatoes for the mainstay of the meal;
I like 'em better mashed or fried, but then they'd be to peel."
He next explores the cupboard — the result is deep disgust,
And the dirty house dismays him, so he straightway starts to dust.
Well, he dusts and dusts and dusts and dusts, till he can dust no more,
And *then* the thought occurs to him he'd better sweep the floor;
You know how all the men folks sweep — they do it on the share,

That is, leave half the dirt behind — the rest goes in the air!
But when he finished, what he said would shock my pious pen,—
The furniture seemed dusty — so he dusted it again!
He noticed, now, the furniture had a prim and proper look,
Like a bunch of kindergartners when they "have their pictures took";
So he sought to rearrange it in a careless, homelike way,
With a result that brought to mind the woes of "moving day."
"Well, anyhow, it's clean at last, and now I'm going to eat;
Why, even baked potatoes would begin to be a treat!"
He opened up the oven door — the kitchen filled with smoke —
There was a smoky flavor to the few, brief words he spoke!
Thinks he, "I'll drink some coffee and eat unleavened bread,"
But when he gulped the coffee, oh, the awful words he said.
I'll not repeat them to you now — they'd jar my jogging verse,
For half of them were swearwords — and the other half were worse!
Oh, salt and sugar are as twins in superficial looks,

But to confuse them damages the very best of cooks.
" Now," said " our noble hero," as the Alger Books would say,
" I'll have to go down town or fast the balance of the day;
Oh, talk of starving Belgians and Polanders and Serbs,
And I'm like Nebuchadnezzar, on a fare of hay and herbs! "
I would not harrow up your souls or start your trickling tears,—
Suffice to say, the day dragged on like six or seven years,
And when, at last, upon his couch he laid his weary head,
He sadly groaned, " I wish to —— somebody'd made the bed! "
Then every quilt and sheet began to slowly, surely glide,
Like an animated glacier or the big Culebra Slide,
And all night long those fiendish things slid on and seemed to say,
" We don't know where we're going, but we're on the way! "
Now in such trying case as this, you scarcely need be told,
Man's language always is as hot as the rest of him is *cold;*
So I can't quote our hero here, in presence of the ladies,

For several of the words he used were synonyms
for Hades.
Need I prolong this agony? Suffice it, then, to
say,
These things — with variations — were repeated,
day by day;
The food was underdone or burnt, it choked the
family cat;
There always was too much of *this* or not enough
of *that;*
So let us multiply the woes of this heartrending
day
By just the number of the days that woman was
away.
Then she came back and asked him, "How on
earth he got along?"
Says he, "Oh, fine, why everything just went off
like a song —
In fact I wrote a little song, while you went off to
wander;
I'm sure you'll like to hear it —
'ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART GROW
FONDER.'"

ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER

QUOTH a certain helpless husband, when his wife had
gone away,
"She needed the vacation and I'm glad to have her
stay,
But when I see our dwelling gone to ruin and to wrack,
I'm wishing, oh, I'm wishing that the womenfolks were
back!

" Now when the womenfolks are here all things are in
their place,
Where whosoever seeks may find, nor lose his Christian
grace;
But now I'd rather start to hunt a needle in a stack,
So I'm wishing, oh, I'm wishing that the womenfolks
were back.

" Can we doubt the all-wise Father knew what He was
about
When He made the man a ' helpmeet ' from the rib
He'd taken out;
Men in their place are useful, but they lack the house-
wife's knack,
So I'm wishing, oh, I'm wishing that the womenfolks
were back.

" Holy Writ contains no truer words, as anyone will
own,
Than those which say, ' It is not good that man should
be alone,'
For in the art of keeping house the wisest man's a
quack,
So I'm wishing, oh, I'm wishing that the womenfolks
were back.

" There' something sort o' lacking in the house from
roof to sill,
You can almost feel the silence, and it strikes you with
a chill;
The disorder cries to heaven that your housekeeping is
slack,
So I'm wishing, oh, I'm wishing that the womenfolks
were back.

" Now when the womenfolks are here, the dishes in
their place,
Seem to fairly beam upon you with a bright and cheer-
ful face,
But now they seem to whisper, as they're jumbled in a
stack,
' We're wishing, oh, we're wishing that the womenfolks
were back.'

" Now a true, home-loving woman could make a home,
I swear,
That was cozy and inviting from a cave-man's savage
lair,
And make it seem the brighter for having been so
black,
So I'm wishing, oh, I'm wishing that the womenfolks
were back.

" For women's nimble fingers and ever willing feet
Bring sort o' something to our lives that makes them
more complete,
So when they're taken from us we mourn their bitter
lack,
And I'm wishing, oh, I'm wishing that the womenfolks
were back! "

THE EVOLUTION OF GOSSIP

THE FACTS

Once Mr. Brown and his good wife
Had just a shade of just such strife
As all men know adds spice to life —
'Twas but a momentary "spat,"
And doubtless half in fun, at that,—
This, now, is gospel, plain and flat.

FIRST VERSION

Alas, a spinster, Sarah Ann,
Who knew not of the ways of man,
Heard all the fuss and straightway ran
And told her neighbor, Mrs. Jones,
With many disconnected moans,
That Brown and wife were throwing stones.

SECOND VERSION

Went Mrs. Jones from door to door,
And added just a little more
To this sad tale of strife and war —
She told of all Brown's brutal force,
And said she reckoned that of course
The fuss would end in a divorce.

THIRD VERSION

Then Mrs. Smith heard what she said,
And went abroad and sadly plead
For aid ere Mrs. Brown was dead;

Imagination was her forte —
She slightly stretched the wild report,
And said the case had gone to court.

FOURTH VERSION

Then Mrs. Thompson heard the tale,
And hurried forth with visage pale
To spread the news, and weep and wail.
She said she heard that Brown's poor wife
Had been assaulted with a knife,
And was in danger of her life.

THE SUCCEEDING VERSIONS

The tale thus brought from feeble birth,
Now grown to monstrous size and girth,
Is scattered broadcast on the earth;
For later versions of the tale
My truthful pen would faint and fail —
The tadpole's larger than a whale!

I SAID IN MY HASTE

He was a liar from his birth,
And till he " lies " in Mother Earth,
We know how much his words are worth —
Call him brother —
For Conscience looks us in the eye,
And to our jeering makes reply
In words we can not well deny,
" You're another."

He lies, when, it must be confessed,
The simple truth had suited best;
He never lets his talent rest —
Call him brother —
Remembering the fatal fact
The dish you broke " was always cracked,"
And though your lies may pass as tact —
You're another.

And he will put the truth to rout
Most brilliantly, beyond a doubt,
When he is easiest found out —
Call him brother —
The rest of us our lies will keep
For times when truth is buried deep,
While the Recording Angels weep —
You're another.

He lies without a thought of pelf
Or of advantage to himself,

And hides the truth upon the shelf —
Call him brother —
The slightest falsehood gives *you* pain
That is,— if it be clearly plain
That it will no advantage gain —
You're another.

As for deceiving me or you,
The only way that he might do
Would be to tell us what is *true* —
Call him brother —
For we who do not always lie
Can sometimes do it on the sly,
Nor wake the echoing reply,
" You're another."

We call our little lies " polite "
And fondly think they're tinted white,
While his are black as darkest night —
Call him brother —
Lest when we stand at Peter's Gate
And hear our liar told his fate,
The Saint may turn to us and state,
" You're another."

THE SEAMY SIDE

The wings of memory bear me back, today,
To childhood's castles in the air and dreams;
All things seemed lovely, then, along the way —
I did not then behold Life's ragged seams

The loving light of innocence redeems
The sordidness from mean, unlovely things —
I did not then behold Life's ragged seams;
Hope had not folded her disabled wings.

O happy days, now vanished long ago —
I did not then behold Life's ragged seams;
Mine untried eyes not yet had learned to know
The shadows with which all existence teems.

I did not then behold Life's ragged seams;
Earth shone in splendor to my guileless eyes;
Would that I still might hold the truth that gleams,
Through darkened years, from that lost Paradise!

BEHIND THE MASK

There was a man who seemed immune from care,
In whom must laughter natively abide;
Yet underneath his jests lay dark despair —
The merry man was sorrowful inside.

Such is the way of Life's strange masquerade,—
Our inner selves few ever learn to know;
Ah, could our guarded secrets be betrayed,
What unguessed truths would the betrayal show!

So with this man, to whom life seemed a jest,
Where Pleasure ruled supreme and undenied,
While in his heart Grief lingered, unconfessed —
The merry man was sorrowful inside.

For seldom is it given to mortal eyes
The inmost shrines of human souls to see —
Our heart of hearts we shroud in deep disguise,
And wrap our hidden selves in mystery.

We cannot know that underneath his cheer
The agonies of Failure ever hide,
Nor see the might-have-beens whose taunting leer
Have made his heart thus sorrowful inside.

The gifts of Youth were spent in wanton waste,
And one by one he lost the golden years —
The vanished joys leave but a bitter taste,
And hidden by his smiles are scalding tears.

Yet do I hold his life not wholly lost,
For Failure bravely met is glorified —
The lesson of your life is worth the cost,
O merry man — grown sorrowful inside!

SHEET LIGHTNING PEOPLE

I know a maid who plays and sings divinely,
And draws and paints with an artistic hand;
While she does many things I sit supinely,
Dazed by her varied gifts, you understand.
And yet at times I think this wondrous woman
Is like sheet lightning — brilliant, we admit —
Whose silver flames the summer skies illumine,
And yet — sheet lightning never makes a hit.

I know a man whose gifts might make him master
Of any one of many noble arts,—
His varied talents led him to disaster,
We see him fail with sorrow in our hearts.
Thus is it true that no sheet lightning mortal,
Howe'er endowed with genius and with wit,
Shall ever enter Fame's enduring portal —
Sheet lightning never yet has made a hit.

We see unnumbered wrongs we know need righting,
Wrongs that bear fruit in endless human woes,
And seek to end them by haphazard fighting,
And strike them blindly with our scattered blows;
But Evil laughs at such sheet lightning warring,
It fears the bolt that cleaves the heart of it,
But warfare such as this must fail of scoring —
Sheet lightning never yet has made a hit.

We scorn the narrow vision of our brother
And visit him with censure plain and frank,

Who holds one vital truth and heeds no other,
And in disdain give him the title, "Crank";
And yet by such the world is upward driven,
By such the lamps of progress have been lit —
While thunderbolts uncounted trees have riven,
Sheet lightning never yet has made a hit.

DISTANCE LENDS ENCHANTMENT

It would touch your heart to see in what peace and amity
All my loving wife's relations and her husband will agree;
Though our quarrels are but few, long ago we found it true,
As the adage tells us, "Distance lends enchantment to the view,"
So at least of all the trials that destroy my happy smiles
Is the fact that 'twixt my home and theirs lie many, many miles.
Oh, our love will pass at par —
From afar, from afar!

Our devotion never fails — while carried through the mails,
But mention living nearer and my valiant visage pales;
While we go our separate ways, you will find above all praise
The respect that to her family your humble servant pays;
Still — I married just my wife and I fear there might be strife
Were not this separation the salvation of my life.
Oh, our love will pass at par —
From afar, from afar!

I declare you never saw such a model son-in-law;
At a hundred miles' perspective I appear without a flaw;
But it cannot be denied by the miles that us divide
Our mutual admiration is immensely multiplied;
And it's furthermore a fact, if those miles you should subtract,
It might add a few dissensions that we hitherto have lacked.

Oh, our love will pass at par —
From afar, from afar.

So I drop a mournful tear when they end their visits here,
But the weeping might be greater were it otherwise, I fear.
I neglected once or twice to give heed to their advice,
And lived for days thereafter in an atmosphere of ice;
And, per contra, like as not if I told them what I thought,
I would find that my existence was uncomfortably hot.

Oh, our love will pass at par —
From afar, from afar!

Now they never fail to claim every virtue you may name
And discover in our children from *their* family somehow came,

While every naughty trait, you will find as sure as fate,
From me, their loving father, they inherit, plain and straight;
Then my worldly wealth is such that my pride it seems to touch
To hear hints I might have managed so I'd now have twice as much.
Oh, our love will pass at par —
From afar, from afar!

When you make your nuptial vows and take yourself a spouse,
Go off some little distance to select your little house;
If your peace of mind is dear, do not make your home too near
To either of your families — you'll regret it many a year;
For this little song of mine may be taken, every line,
As a beacon light of wisdom — on your pathway let it shine.
And your love will pass at par —
From afar, from afar!

ZEROS

There are times when I grow sad,
Thinking of the little tad
Who once learned to count and add,
And was taught
That the cipher, large and round,
With its name's imposing sound,
You invariably found
Equaled 0.

In those days, with hook and line,
When the fishing had been fine,
There'd be maybe eight or nine
Fishes caught;
But we'd mutilate the truth
In those joyous days of youth,
When our total catch, forsooth,
Equaled 0.

And I still recall the year —
I was naughty then, I fear,
For the only thing that dear
Santa brought
In my socks from tops to toes
Were some articles like clothes,
Which to my mind, goodness knows,
Equaled 0.

Now my childhood's left behind,
And I muse upon mankind,

And the poorest sort I find
In the lot
Are the ones in whom no sin
Could find room to enter in —
All they will be or have been
Equals 0.

There are some we might rehearse
Who are bad — and some are worse;
They assuredly are a curse
To be fought;
But deliver us from those
Who have neither faults nor foes —
All they are, as I suppose,
Equals 0.

There are some of gentle sex
Who man's wisdom do perplex —
Let's denominate them X
On the spot;
They are quantities unknown,
But we love them all, we own,
Even those who, we are shown,
Equal 0.

You, my child, be good or bad,
Be of merry mind or sad,
Oh, be rational or mad
And distraught;
But whatever else you do,
Be it never said of you

All you did when you were through
Equaled 0!

Though you never gain success
Or the goal for which you press,
Though all things you gain be less
Than you sought;
Not mere winning of the prize,
In the judgment of the wise,
Marks you not of those whose size
Equals 0.

Much, at best, that we achieve,
Many tangled webs we weave,
We in future shall perceive
Come to naught;
For the wisest of all kings
Found that vain are earthly things,
That the joys existence brings
Equaled 0.

What are all the zeros for?
Though we ask it o'er and o'er,
'Tis a mystery more and more
Deeply fraught,
Evil may be understood
As the shadow cast by good,
Though we'd make it, if we could,
Equal 0.

But although from age to age
Patiently have seer and sage

Gathered wisdom, page by page,
Dearly bought;
Still our knowledge of the Past,
Or the Future, looming vast,
Weighed and measured at the last
Equals 0.

TRUMPS

I LOVE to see a little child
By worldly stains all undefiled,
And so with joy my spirit jumps
To hail the time when "hearts are trumps."

But later on, turn where we may,
Life is a battle and affray,
Where we must meet with many bumps
And where, I fear, now "clubs are trumps."

If in our struggles, afterwhile,
Perchance shall fickle fortune smile,
Then shall the jewels bloom in clumps,
And pride shall swell, with "diamonds trumps."

This, too, alas, shall soon pass by,
Since earthly things must fade and die;
Then comes the solemn thud of lumps
Of "earth to earth"— and "spades are trumps!"

BETWEEN THE LINES

The gracious gift is given alike to each
To glean the meaning from our common speech;
The bare, blank import of our time-worn words
Comes to us freely, as the songs to birds,—
But few are given the power to read the mines
Of mystic meaning, writ between the lines.

The hackneyed words our lips or pens may join,
Though in themselves as dull as common coin,
Yet, in our use, to seeing hearts may show
Truths we may think are hidden far below,
And meanness stares at us, or virtue shines —
Unwittingly revealed between the lines.

For, lo, the words themselves are not the whole —
They are the outward form, but not the soul,
Whose spirit must escape the dullard's eyes,
A godlike gift meant only for the wise,
Who from the grapes of language draw the wines
Of the diviner thought — between the lines!

So the solutions we so direly need
The thoughtless throng may hold who runs may
read;
The outward answers may indeed be plain,
So those who seek shall never search in vain —
But fruitlessly we seek the Delphic Shrines,—
Life's deeper secrets lie between the lines.

THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

He builded him a dwelling, strong and high,
And thought, "So well and stanchly will I build
That the corroding years shall pass it by,
And it shall stand when long my hand is stilled."

Then in the earth nearby, with careless hand,
In idle hour, as we may well suppose —
No thought of the far future wisely planned —
He planted just a little fragile rose.

But Time dealt harshly with that dwelling place,
And in the end has wrought its utter doom,
And now has left behind no faintest trace,
Save where a few neglected roses bloom.

So in our lives the deeds we hope will last
Perhaps shall thus pass utterly away,
And nothing shall survive the dying Past
But things we thought were of the passing day.

To-DAY all things I undertook went crisscross and awry,
With not a gleam of heaven's blue or sunshine in the sky;
All I have done from dawn to dusk has seemed to end amiss,
And so as darkness falls, tonight, I feel about
like *this!*

I mind me, even as a child, how some days happened so,
An awful blur of gloom and tears, of heartaches and of woe;
Then, in the evening, brother Will would say, "I tell you, sis,
It seems to me that all day long you've been about
like this!"

I trow it has been ever so, that since the Fall of Man
Such days have crossed his path on earth and tripped him as he ran,
And even the haloed saints and seers, and prophets, too, I wis,
Have had, at times, a day or so when things went just
like this.

So, dearest, come to me, tonight, and smooth my
silver hair,
And let us knit, as poets say, " the ravelled sleeve
of care ";
Let us lay by this careworn day, and end it with
a kiss,
And pray another will not soon occur that's just
like this!

For when the hour-glass of our life has spilled
its shining sands,
And in the last, long sleep we fold our worn and
weary hands,
Then may we in our Father's house find never end-
ing bliss,
Nor meet an angel in the throng who feels at all
like this.

WHY?

"WHY?" asks the little child, whose wond'ring eyes
The mystery of its new found world defies,
Its elders' wisdom putting to the test,
To find it but a shallow thing, at best —
With wide-eyed wonder, boundless as the sky,
And the eternal questions, "how?" and "why?"

"Why?" asks the man of science, worn and old,
Yet with the long sought answer still untold;
He finds some truths to tireless search revealed,
But all the rest in age-old darkness sealed —
Unto the wisest, as to you and I,
Still come the baffling questions, "how?" and "why?"

"Why?" asks the thinker who has pondered long
Over the endless struggle, Right with Wrong,—
He who has looked on Life, and seen therein
How strangely mixed are righteousness and sin,
And all the heights and depths that in it lie —
Well may his saddened spirit question, "why?"

"Why?" asks again the lover of his kind,
Must wealth parade and hunger march behind?
Why is man's lot in life divided thus,
Unchanged, from the far past of Lazarus?
Equal, at last, each waits his hour to die,
Perhaps to know the long sought reason "why."

" Why? " ask the prophets of the human soul,
Who seek from the Unknown the veil to roll —
Who breathed the breath of life in yon dull clod?
In vain —" Canst thou by seeking find out God? "
Eternity alone may make reply
To our impatient, unavailing, " why? "

Nay, little sweetheart, with the wond'ring eyes,
Not all the wisdom of the wisest wise,
Nor all the knowledge of the ages past
Can answer half your questionings, at last;
We seek in vain the truths for which you sigh,
While from the great Unknown is echoed, " why? "

QUARRELS

Sometimes it seems to happen that the world is
full of spite,
When it's natural as breathing to quarrel, fuss
and fight,
And everything we undertake goes every way but
right,
And tears must flow.

The children start a quarrel at every word that's
said,
And father goes off angry and wishing he were
dead,
While mother stays and struggles, with an aching
heart and head,
And all is woe!

If a barometer is near, it indicates a storm,
And the thermometer will show the temperature is
warm,
And stinging words of anger like honey bees will
swarm,
We know not whence.

And mother says that her belief — or rather her
suspicion —
Is that father's cold has settled right in his dis-
position,
And that she wishes — but she knows that there's
no use in wishin'—
So why commence?

Yet, in truth, these times of anger are but ripples
on a pool
That below is deep and quiet, therefore soon the
wrath must cool,
And end by all admitting they were acting like a
fool,
And meant it not.

For on Life's jangling journey, if we would love
and live,
We find the need of spirits that leak anger like
a sieve,
And hearts that can remember to forget and to
forgive,
And bygones blot!

THE PASSING OF THE SLATE

My vagrant mind strays back, tonight,
To school days of an earlier date,
When all that I would draw or write
Appeared upon my old, cracked slate.

With knotty sums or scribbled text,
Or bits of youthful art thereon,
And if the work its author vexed,
One smudge — and all of it was gone.

The teacher's portrait might appear —
If we escaped his watchful eye —
To be rubbed out in haste and fear,
When the original came by.

A thousand things we might discern,
The aimless work of idle mind,
Each disappearing in its turn
And leaving not a trace behind.

But now the slate has lost its rule;
Today finds paper in its place,
And, both in life and in the school,
Mistakes are harder to erase.

The records of our later years
Are full of errors, small and great,
That we'd efface with joyful tears,
Were they but written on a slate!

And full of words best left unsaid,
That make our brother's spirit bleed;
Stones given to him who asked for bread
And mocking thus his utter need.

We know all things are wisely planned,
So let us quarrel not with Fate
That we the power may not command
Of wiping bygones from Life's slate.

BLOTS

Only an inkspot, idly spilled upon the virgin page,
Yet no man's hand, however skilled, nor touch of mellow age
Shall ever more remove the trace of the offending spot,
Or ever utterly efface the little, hateful blot.

So in our lives, as journeying on, we pass the fleeting years,
There's many a page that's stained upon, and neither time nor tears,
Nor aught the future holds in store can ever take away
The smirch that recollection sore sees on that by-gone day!

But though to cleanse the past in vain we stretch our helpless hands,
The future lies without a stain; so may I break the bands
That bind me to the blotted past, and claim that future mine,
That it may brighten to the last with gleams of the Divine!

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE

We love to praise the modest flower
That blooms unseen in hidden bower,
But flaunting blossoms catch our eyes,
For, lo, it pays to advertise.

We all admire the modest maid,
In simple, quiet dress arrayed —
Such often miss connubial ties,
Because it pays to advertise.

Some "ragtime" songs, you'll please take note,
Earn more than all that Shakespeare wrote —
The golden harvest blinds our eyes,
And proves it pays to advertise.

"The preacher" truly was not wrong,
The battle is not to the strong,
And "neither yet bread to the wise,"—
He knew it paid to advertise.

Full-fed Success delights to flaunt
Before the envious eyes of Want —
Success denotes the truly wise,
And shows it pays to advertise.

We sing the praises of the poor;
For their distress our aid is sure;
Sweet Charity from housetops cries —
Behold it pays to advertise.

From Him Who bade us veil from sight
The left hand's good deeds from the right
We turn — the Father of all Lies
Knows well it pays to advertise.

We read the graven epitaph
Above forgotten dust, and laugh,
For whether mortal lives or dies,
He knows it pays to advertise.

We sing the praise of modest worth,
While egotists acquire the earth;
To such it is a lawful prize —
Their creed: It pays to advertise.

Then bow before the Golden Calf,
You who have grown too wise by half
To eat the bread of sacrifice —
Instead, it pays to advertise.

The world is busy with its cares,
Nor looks beyond its own affairs,
And hence it is without surprise
We find it pays to advertise.

MODEL PEOPLE

There's a boy who never lies,
Never steals his mother's pies,
But as doubtless you surmise —
He is dead;
Never sneaks away to swim,
Never climbs a slender limb;
All that's ever wrong with *him* —
He is dead.

There's a girl who is not vain,
Never gives a playmate pain;
From these premises it's plain —
She is dead;
Never minds the looking glass,
Never giggles when I pass,
She is faultless — but alas —
She is dead.

There's a woman, so I hear,
Turns to gossip a deaf ear;
You may think this passing queer —
She is dead;
Never utters spiteful things,
To the cause of justice clings,
But at present she wears wings —
She is dead.

There's a man who never cheats
Any mortal that he meets,

But he 's wrapped in winding sheets —
He is dead;
Is not selfish, never tries
To hog up the choicest prize,
But I own with saddest sighs —
He is dead.

You have often read, perchance,
Of the heroes of romance;
Reason tells you at a glance —
They are dead;
They are folks of noble mind,
Made of all good traits combined,
So I sorrow when I find —
They are dead.

HIS SWEET TEMPERED WIFE

An even temper should be held a pearl above all price,
And outbursts of unbridled wrath are always far from nice,
Especially in womankind, and therefore what a treat
Is given him who has a wife whose temper's always sweet!

The neighbors marvel, one and all, at her angelic ways;
Her calm, unruffled frame of mind they never cease to praise;
Why should her husband, then, complain of food he cannot eat —
The heartless brute who has a wife whose temper's always sweet.

We must admit that chaos reigns forever in her house,
Her cupboard shelves would drive away a self respecting mouse;
But should he growl because his home is never clean and neat —
This brutal boor who has the wife whose temper's always sweet?

Oh, never be it said of her she willingly would shirk,
Still a little irritation is inseparable from *work;*

And so she just avoids them *both;* his joy should be complete —
Thrice blessed man who has a wife whose temper's always sweet!

Her husband meets his daily round of labor, strife and care,
And I fear his disposition sometimes shows some signs of wear,
Yet with a bright and cheery smile she never fails to greet
This favored man who has a wife whose temper's always sweet.

What if her children should be cross — she sends them off to play
With some near neighbor's little folks — it's such an easy way;
She would not think of chiding them for playing on the street —
O happy father with a wife whose temper is so sweet!

What though her shiftless management he daily finds to be
A burden such as was the lot of Sindbad of the Sea;
What though he finds his life thereby foredoomed to sure defeat;
Should he not thank his lucky stars her temper is so sweet?

His sins are large and many but his pathways are so rough
That we trust they may be pardoned — he's been punished quite enough;
So we trust the Gates of Peter shall admit his faltering feet —
The sinful man who had a wife whose temper was so sweet.

So I'll not feel stunned or startled if, when first my dazzled eyes
Catch a gleaming glimpse of glory through the Gates of Paradise,
I behold enthroned in triumph on the very choicest seat
The man who had the wife on earth whose temper was so sweet!

HER EASTER THOUGHTS

She sat demurely in the choir;
Her face seemed lit with sacred fire,
And as she sang I seemed to hear
Angelic voices, sweet and clear.

And as she sang I prayed that I
Be given power, from on High,
To read the thoughts that seemed to raise
Her rapturous soul in songs of praise.

Then Providence the gift bestowed,
And as the heavenly music flowed,
The inmost secrets of her mind
Were given me — and I repined!

She sang: "My Father knows my need;
And I can trust His love;
He may not always deign to give me
The things which most I crave."

She *thought:* "Gee! How I wish my gowns
Were half as swell as Cynthy Brown's,
And Mrs. Jones — the hateful cat —
Has got a stunning Easter hat!"

She sang: "My Father knows my need;
He will supply it all;
He hears His children when they cry,
And he answers when they call."

She *thought:* "Now there's Malindy Stowe
Has got herself another beau;
I wouldn't think it could be true —
But he's a-settin' in their pew!"

She sang: "My Father knows my need;
His love no tongue can tell;
And if sometimes He does deny me,
I know for me 'tis well."

She *thought:* "Sue Thompson's latest dress
Was never made for her, I guess;
Her rich relations' cast-off clothes
She thinks are pretty swell, I s'pose!"

She sang: "My Father knows my need;
I fear no dread alarms,
For round about and underneath me
Are Everlasting arms."

She *thought:* "Look there at Becky Brush —
She and her beau are soft as mush;
She's giggling there behind her fan,
Stuck up because she's got a *man!*"

She sang: "My Father knows,
. . . Oh, yes, He knows,
And with my soul 'tis well."

Thought I, fair maid, it may be so,
I'm very sure I do not know;

And if I knew a great deal *less*
I'd like it better, I confess.

Then I to Providence did pray
To take that fatal gift away;
I never wish to pierce the screen
That leaves our inner thoughts unseen.

Nay, from that hour I daily ask
That no X-ray shall e'er unmask
The hidden thoughts of mortal mind,
And if it *should* — then *strike me blind!*

THE OLD-FASHIONED GRANDMOTHER

There is something calm and holy in her quiet, furrowed face,
On which many bygone sorrows have left their lasting trace,
But their passing has not left her in either face or mind
Anything but present sweetness, with no bitterness behind.

We may smile, perhaps, a moment at her queer old Quaker cap,
As, beneath her clicking needles, grows the mitten in her lap;
And again, no doubt, while gazing on the slender paper rolls,
Made to light the evening candles of those frugal old-time souls.

But she gave us strings of empty spools — a treasure, you'll allow,
And queer old-fashioned pennies, as large as quarters, now;
And let us run her spinning wheel and snuff the candle, too,
And when she spoke, said "thee" and "thy," instead of "your" and "you."

She knows the old privations have forevermore
gone by,
While a spendthrift generation complains that
living's high,
And lives in loving memories of a simpler, slower
past,
When men's wants were not so boundless and their
pace was not so fast.

She knows the rapid current of the years turns
never back,
But brings new compensations for the things that
it may lack;
Yet I doubt not there are moments when her gentle
soul regrets
The coming of the present, with its wealth and
suffragettes.

O maidens of the present, when the years have
come and gone
And brought you to the ending of the paths you're
travelling on,
May we find you all as worthy of our reverence,
at last,
O Grandmas of the Future, as these Grandmas of
the Past!

You needn't look for Boomville on the general run
of maps,
It's not a full sized city, so it won't be there, per-
haps;
But a map that deals in detail with our good old
Hoosier State
Will show the town of Boomville — or it *should*,
at any rate.

You've often seen some little boy pretendin' he's
a man,
And actin' big and dignified and " grown-up " as
he can;
Well, Boomville's that way, and if *she* could just
increase in girth
By *tryin'* to be big, she'd be metropolis of the
earth.

We claim a thousand people, though some jealous
towns deride,
And hint that from the census man the half of
them must hide;
Or if we claim a " thousand souls," these scornful
folks amuse
Themselves by sayin' that the " souls " are mostly
soles of *shoes!*

We have a half a dozen stores, a pair of barber shops,
A railroad, too, with lots of trains, and now and then one *stops;*
We have an elevator and a moving picture show,
A High School and a saw mill and three churches in a row.

We've many social doings: there's the Boomville Ladies' Aid,
Without which all our churches would be bankrupt, I'm afraid;
We've the Daughters of Rebekah — called the "Beckys," just for short —
And seven other Lodges of every style and sort.

We're neighborly in Boomville, and everyone's affairs
Are sort of public property — we take 'em on the shares;
And this is pleasant, too — sometimes — for when we meet disgrace
We wish that it were otherwise, and hide our luckless face.

When strangers come to Boomville, the interest is intense,
Who they may be and when they came and also why and whence;
And when we once discover news, the way it's magnified

Would make a compound microscope lose all its
proper pride.

So if you seek for Boomville, though it's missing
on the map,
It's here in Indiana, in Nature's lavish lap,
And has a population of a thousand — *more* or
less —
And is the finest town on earth, as we ourselves
confess.

THE LEISURE CLASS IN BOOMVILLE

I NOTE some foreign critic says there is no "leisure class"
In this uncultured country of the free,
But I desire to say to him, I'd like for him to pass
Around among our Boomvilleites with me!

I'd point him out a "leisure class" at Grayson's grocery store,
And others at Bill Barber's blacksmith shop;
At Hank O'Brien's shoe shop there are always several more —
Why, you'll find 'em half the places that you stop.

They sit in Grayson's grocery store and chew and smoke and chew,
In an atmosphere that turns a stranger green;
You find the articles of food the clerk hands out to you
Are flavored, one and all, with nicotine!

A few in Barber's blacksmith shop will always take their rest;
Bill punctuates the talk with hammer blows —
To watch another working gives a loafer added zest,
And doubles his enjoyment of repose.

They gather at O'Brien's and watch him cobble shoes
While they assassinate Old Father Time,

Debatin' about politics, disseminatin' news,
Or talkin' of the latest noted crime.

Or, in the pleasant summer time, they'll sit along
the walk
And chaff and joke their neighbors as they pass,
Discuss the President's mistakes and talk and *talk*
and TALK —
O my dear foreign friend —" no leisure class!"

" No leisure class!" It may be true we're short
of titled lords
With damp and moldy castles and a yacht;
But we've a leisure class, my friend,— you'll find
them whittling boards,
And at checkers they are Johnny-on-the-spot!

You'll find 'em at the harness shop, you'll find 'em
at the Bank,
At the hardware, sitting throned on kegs of nails;
Where some new building's going up they orna-
ment a plank,
And they gather in en masse at " Public Sales."

Then, too, we often entertain the migratory kind,
Whose wealth has been destroyed by fire and flood,
And who, to trust appearances, are crippled, lame
or blind —
These are our " leisure " princes of the blood.

We must admit that Boomville lacks "the glory
that was Greece";
In some things Rome and Paris may surpass,
And we've no titles, you might say, but Justice of
the Peace,—
But don't tell us we have "no leisure class!"

Of the famous Boomville Banner I now propose
to speak,—
A journalistic triumph occurring once a week;
All Boomville reads it through and through, as we
delight to state —
Four pages filled with Boomville news and four
with " boiler-plate."

We learn that Sam Smith lost a horse and Jim
Jones found a cow,
And that Bill Barber's new front porch is almost
finished now;
We learn the Perkins family took dinner with Sim
Steele —
This important news concluding with a tribute to
the meal!

We read that Mrs. Smithers brought the editor
a pie,
And Mrs. Stump some apples that were " apples
of his eye ";
For the finest, fairest products of all the country
'round
In the Boomville Banner sanctum are invariably
found.

They bring in home-made sausages, they bring in
fruit and flowers,
And " garden sass " and cottage cheese and
rhubarb wine in showers —

Such gifts betoken generous hearts, for who could
basely hint
They might be prompted by desire to see one's
name in print!

"Our Country Correspondence" fills the last
page to a dot,
The news from Ginger Center, Jericho and Possum
Trot,
From Panama and Summit Hill, Highridge and
Galilee —
For which each correspondent receives his Banner
free.

The Banner has its enemies, but none of them
deny
Its gift for hiding ugly truths in a euphemistic
lie;
Thus when the Banner says "resigned" the word's
interpreted
As meaning, nine times out of ten, some one was
"fired" instead.

I say it has its enemies: some criticize its stuff
As too much this or too much that, or maybe not
enough;
And once a teacher from the east remarked its
columns each
Appeared to her like hospitals for mangled parts
of speech!

Its sentences she could not parse, she said, to save
her life
(Fact is, the Banner's English isn't quite like
Cæsar's wife);
And then she'd poke no end of fun at its unceasing
love
For ending half its sentences with " to " or " for "
or " of."

Still, the Banner stands for Boomville — speak
not of it in scorn;
It chronicles our history from the hour when we
are born,
And when we end life's journey our obituaries
shine —
They only cost a dollar each (verse five cents to
the line).

So let the city papers count their readers in a
host;
Perhaps they may be larger, but the Banner's
read the most;
At its items or its grammar though our enemies
deride,
Yet each subscriber points to it with unabated
pride.

BUMBOS CASTLE

AN EPIC POEM

BOOK I

The valor, might and majesty of Don Bumbos doth relate;
How, crowned with triumph, he doth lie in a most peaceful state.

'Tis the middle of the night by the sundial;
The nightingale and the cat both sing for joy,
One in a tree, in a symphonic style,
The other on a wall, full shy and coy.
Don Bumbos in his castle snoreth loud,
For well he wots that he is safe from foes;
And he hath captured a bag of gold this day
From a rich merchant traveller, one of those
Whom knightly heroes do despise and slay —
Hence see Don Bumbos, passing glad and proud!

BOOK II

Doth to the reader introduce the Lady Ethelyn,
And tells how loving suitors her hand do strive to win.

And in a gloomy chamber by the hall
His daughter likewise resteth in great peace;
Full twice ten lovers have attacked the wall,
Fighting with knightly lance and battering ram,
But, as the walls are strong, each time their efforts cease,
And each retires as meek as Mary's lamb.

BOOK III

Describes a mournful prisoner and his exceeding woe,
And also furthermore relates how he becameth so.

And one of these sad youths had captured been,
And since hath languished in a tower strong,
Wherein he maketh an unearthy din
With lovelorn lays and most heartrending song —
So doth he while the weary hours along.

BOOK IV

Restrained by his too tender heart, the Poet doth conceal
A scene that if displayed might make the reader saddened feel.

Nor he the first that Sir Knight Bumbos stern,
Of lovely, gentle Ethelyn the pa,
Did drag into the Castle's gloomy maw —
Of *them* their friends and parents ne'er did learn,
So o'er their end a curtain I will draw.

BOOK V

Sir Wilfred's wondrous beauty the Poet doth relate,
The which hath served to save him from an untimely fate.

Whilome these other captives rot and mold,
It fares not so with Wilfred, y-clept the Bold.
How then did he, a prisoner, escape
The direful end his predecessors found?
He hath a comely face and knightly shape,

And noble bearing, as of lord or king,
So in the Castle tower, large and round,
He was confined to ever wail and sing.

BOOK VI

The Poet here is forced, anon, to make a little pause
To give an opportunity for well deserved applause.

So Sir Knight Bumbos, with his sacks of gold,
His lovely daughter, in her chamber old,
And eke Sir Wilfred, in his dungeon cold,
Have whiled away the night, and now the gray
And misty dawn foretells the coming day.

BOOK VII

The Poet here retires to a point removed from harm,
For a herald of the enemy hath sounded an alarm.

Hark to the herald's horn before the gate;
Behold the spears, as in array they glisten!
Don Bumbos heedeth not except to state:
"Let the fools blow, I do not deign to listen!"

BOOK VIII

Contains the sad emotions of Sir Wilfred, surnamed
Bold,
As from his lofty prison he the strangers doth behold.

Sir Wilfred, in his lonely dungeon tower,
Heareth the trumpet call, and peereth out
To see who comes at such unseemly hour.
He wotteth well the cause of the attack;

Another knight hath come on and about
Affairs of love — with mighty joy he turneth back:
" He, too, the way of all shall shortly go,
But should he win, oh, woe the day, alack! "
By jealousy o'ercome he falleth low,
And tears his hair in unavailing woe.

BOOK IX

The Poet now the bloody strife beholdeth from afar,
And then eftsoones goes on to state the outcome of the war.

Now do we hear the heavy armor rattle,
And clashing spears upon the field of battle —
But, well-a-day, need I prolong the tale,
When mightier bards have sung of combats gory?
The powers of pen and ink too soon would fail,
So I proceed with this most mournful story.
Suffice to say the lovelorn knights were captured,
And in some future years, gadzooks, I ween,
Their last remains would make just such a scene
As, some time ago, I declined to show
To my hearers so enraptured!

BOOK X

The Poet here relateth how the red and ruddy wine
The powers of the soldiery doth sadly undermine.

Don Bumbos stalks through his ancestral halls,
Through the capacious halls of Bumbos Castle;
While one by one each gallant soldier falls,

Not from his wounds, but from the wine and
wassail
Don Bumbos the Superb gives to his yeomen,
When they have bravely vanquished all their foe-
men.

BOOK XI

The Poet here beholdeth another fierce attack,
While every armored soldier lies snoring on his back.

But hark! A herald's trumpet sounds again
Before the mighty walls of Bumbos Castle —
Who will defend it now? Its garrison,
As I have said, are overcome by wassail;
Don Bumbos only hath his head — and rues it,
When he bethinks he is so like to lose it!

BOOK XII

The herald's proclamation the Poet doth reveal,
Then to a distance he retires to wait the clash of steel.

The herald forth doth ride and this proclaims:
"We call upon Don Bumbos to surrender
This Castle up, by all the glorious names
Of Thor and Woden, gods of war and thunder;
We are the liegemen of Wilfred the Bold,
Who shall this Castle ever have and hold."

BOOK XIII

To the herald's proclamation Don Bumbos makes
reply,
The which would seem to indicate the fur is going to
fly.

Then thus replied Don Bumbos the Serene,
Saying: "A thousand mightier hosts I've routed;
Above them all the grass grows tall and green;
They also of surrender often spouted!"
. . . Dear Reader, if in battles you delight,
Select your favorite; to this case apply it;
I shall but give the ending of the fight,
And then proceed upon my tale in quiet.
Suffice to say the Castle taken was,
And Bold Sir Wilfred soon was liberated,
While stern Don Bumbos roughly shaken was —
And so the end of this dread combat's stated.

BOOK XIV

The Poet heaves a sigh or two for yesterday's mischance,
Then tunes his harp to sing a lay of love and of romance.

And as for that sweet Lady, Ethelyn,
Who can describe her mingled joy and sorrow?
She tells Sir Wilfred how she tried to win
His freedom and — ah well, they wed tomorrow!

BOOK XV

The Poet now, in such a way that none it may offend,
Lets fall a gentle hint or two of stern Don Bumbos' end.

The question now Sir Wilfred much doth bother,
In what wise he should deal with his new father;
He muses much and oft consults his lady;

Some his conclusion might think somewhat shady,
For — by the shades of Christopher Columbus —
It also was the conclusion of Don Bumbos!

BOOK XVI

The Poet with exceeding joy describes the wedding day,
Although, alack, his feeble pen its pomp can not portray.

Behold the marriage feasts! Now the procession
Starts from the mighty gates of Bumbos Castle;
The Evil One and jesters in progression
Follow behind and quaff the wine and wassail.
All swore no fairer pair had ever been
Than Wilfred and his Lady, Ethelyn.
The only thing to mar the nuptial feast,—
The absence of Don Bumbos — late deceased,
The which hath left his daughter brokenhearted,
While Wilfred also mourns the dear departed.

BOOK XVII

The Poet comes at last unto the ending of his lay,
And puts his silent harp aside until some other day.

Hark to the horns at Bumbos Castle blowing!
Quaff of the wine at Bumbos Castle flowing!
Sir Wilfred lived in sweet tranquillity —
That is, he only fought about five knights a day,
And as throughout his life he preyed on merchants,
He doubtless died full rich in treasure, perchance.

Far famed became his banner as it floated
In knightly joust by many a castle moated;
But I must lay aside my goose quill facile,
And bid a sad farewell to Bumbos Castle!

A STONE-AGE CURTAIN LECTURE

SHE

THEY say our neighbors just across have found
the nicest cave —
So light and dry, while ours is damp and gloomy
as the grave;
She came here lately to parade the bearskin dress
she wore —
Brand new — and I've been wearing *mine* for forty
years or more!

HE

The cave we've lived in all these years is plenty
good enough;
The one I went and dragged you from did look
a trifle tough;
And as regards your bearskin dress, I think, be-
yond a *doubt*,
That it would be a sinful waste to fail to wear it
out.

SHE

You know as well as I do that it isn't *fit* to *wear;*
Some wouldn't wear it here at home, but I must
everywhere;
And even if it's not worn out, it's *out* of *style*, be-
cause
It's all the fashion, nowadays, to leave on all the
claws!

HE

If you try to follow fashion, you'll find out, I'll be bound,
There aren't bears enough on earth for the skins to go around;
You'd better wear the one you have and keep it looking neat,
And be thankful for your blessings that you have enough to eat.

SHE

Yes! But I have always noticed, with the country full of deer,
You will kill some hulking mammoth, and we eat it for a year;
But I noticed at the neighbor's, when I visited them there,
They'd venison, thesaurus meat and several kinds of bear!

HE

That's enough of such complaining — if my patience you should tax
With your foolish prattle longer I will hit you with my ax;
I'm not quick enough for reindeer — *that*, perhaps, is very true;
But, I say without vain boasting, I am quick enough for you!

SHE

I would like to see you do it — you're afraid to,
though, of course;
If you dare so much as threaten, there'll soon be
a divorce;
You wouldn't think of fighting with a bear of half
your size,
And if you mention fighting *me*, I'll scratch out
both your eyes!

MORAL

In the Stone Age, as at present, when a quarrel
has occurred,
We surmise that to the woman there belonged the
final word.

THE HOBO

Poor unkempt victim of the Wanderlust,
Disgraced, despised — a modern Lazarus —
Thou, like Ulysses, art " become a name
For always roaming with a hungry heart."
The watch dog views thee with suspicious eye
And surly snarl; the housewife hands thee forth
Remnants of last week's breakfast, cast-off clothes
Of bygone years, while her more heartless spouse
Drops hints of gnarly woodpiles, ax and saw —
Speaks of the benefits of exercise
And thrusts thee forth in the cold world again.
Our modern fresh air faddists have at least
Nothing on thee — across thy lowly couch
The fresh air filters through the barbwire fence,
By the lone straw stack where thou findest rest.
Much hast thou travelled, likewise, though the scenes
Thou seeest mainly are but flying ties,
Red litten switchyards and dark-browed police,
And dusty highways, leading on and on
Past countless homes, but none to shelter thee.
Though well deserved thy sorrows, I doubt not,
Yet goes my heart in sympathy to thee,
For this I learned while I was yet a child,—
'Tis easier to slide down an icy hill
Than upward climb its slipp'ry slopes again.
So when the final summons of thy Judge
Bids thee " move on," and quit this vale of tears,
I pray the boon thou long hast vainly sought
Be thine at last — Eternities of Rest!

BUT

'Tis sad that as we journey on
Through this brief world, so quickly gone,
We meet with such unkindly "knocks"
That charity in sorrow mocks.
For some will sweetly cast a slur
That clingeth like a burdock burr,
And makes a palace seem a hut
With an occasional timely "but."

We praise the virtues of our friends,
Our admiration never ends;
We build their reputations high
As the deep azure of the sky;
Inspired by friendship's sacred fire,
We ask that all the world admire,
And *then* — their throats we gently cut
While ending up our praise with "but."

We are so fair that Heaven knows
We'd never wrong our foulest foes;
We always give the devil his due,
With sometimes extra measure, too;
And those who wrong us, we admit,
We're told to love by Holy Writ;
Still — they'll have little cause to strut
When we conclude our tale with "but."

But when our journey's at an end,
And we are done with foe and friend,

And every knock and slam and slur
Are numbered with the things that were,
Perchance we'll stand at Peter's Gate
And for admittance boldly wait,
Then hear the golden portals shut —
"I'd gladly bid you enter . . . 'BUT'!"

OUR LOST ILLUSIONS

In youth we thought the Ship of State
Was manned by statesmen — pardon laughter;
We find the blockhead and his mate,
The clever grafter.

And men who uttered words of light
We used to think were surely sainted —
But some we find are not as white
As they were painted.

We thought that we could gain renown,
And strove to do it — as who wouldn't?
But now, when Fate has turned us down,
We find we couldn't!

We fondly hoped, in bygone years,
To hew our way through walls of granite,
But we are haunted now by fears
Perhaps we cannot.

We thought our heart was all our own,
And fancy free — what young man doesn't?
But when the fleeting years had flown
We found it wasn't.

We thought that women were as pure
And sweet as pictured in romances;
Some are — with others I am sure
You take some chances!

Of course I know too well, today,
These fancies were but vain delusions,
And yet for their return I pray —
My lost illusions!

THE GIRL FOR ME

Oh, I know a little lassie who is so divinely " sassy "
That I know she is the only girl for me;
She will stamp her foot and order, and I have such feelings toward her
That I'd rather be her humble slave than free!

For I love this little lassie and I think that's *prima facie*
Proof that she must be the only girl for me;
And I sometimes sadly wonder what we'd do if torn asunder,
So I pray that such a thing may never be!

Well I know there's not a lassie between Nome and Tallahassee
Can compare with her — the only girl for me;
We are so completely mated that it's evidently fated,
And *that's* a fate from which I'll never flee!

For to me this little lassie seems so queenly and so " classy "
That it's settled she's the only girl for me;
And no joy could be sweeter and no happiness completer —
She's just locked my heart and thrown away the key!

REST IN PEACE

The years roll by, unbroken in their flow,
Bringing the longing that must stronger grow,
That earthly cares may find their sweet release
In earth's great bosom, there to rest in peace.

From fickle Fortune comes blow and comes caress,
But no man knoweth if she shall curse or bless —
There is no haven from her vain caprice,
No certain refuge, till we rest in peace.

Why then in sorrow and in bitter grief
Are we complaining that this life is brief?
An all-wise Mercy made thus short its lease,
That in its closing we may rest in peace.

Wayworn and weary, we shall sow and reap;
At last "He giveth his beloved sleep";
So, as the burdens of the years increase,
Mourn not their passing — we shall rest in peace.

In hours of trial must the way seem long,
Full of vain striving of the right with wrong;
That is Eternal — ours is sweet release:
Our labor ended, we shall rest in peace!

THE POET AND HIS ART

What is the poet's gift,
What gives him power to lift
The overhanging clouds away and show the shining rift?
'Tis not in jingling rhymes
Or words whose music chimes —
It is his power to banish clay and dwell in spirit climes.

Whence come his melodies?
The murmur of the bees,
The measured sighing of the wind among the swaying trees
He borrows, one and all,
With cadences that call
Forevermore from ocean shore and plashing waterfall.

What of the poet's heart?
For all his magic art,
Yet do we find in all mankind its like and counterpart;
But he, alone, may dare
To lay its secrets bare,
And shadow forth the harmonies he finds abiding there.

What sees the poet's eye
That all may not descry?

Perchance, the teardrops on his lids have rainbowed all the sky;
What music meets his ear
That others may not hear?
None, save that in his soul sometimes it wakes an echo clear.

What is the poet's choice?
Only to be the voice
That speaketh for the voiceless, when they mourn or they rejoice.
I hold him direly wrong
Who holds the poet's song —
Though of his heart it be a part — to him can all belong.

What then is his reward,
Who thus hath freely poured
The music of his spirit out, to seek an answering chord?
Not the cold world's acclaim —
Not wealth or fickle fame —
The song is its own recompense to the singer worth the name!

"NEUTRAL"

Ah, we are "neutral." From our moral heights
We stand and watch the Old World's agony,—
As careless of its clash of right and wrong,
The struggle that endures throughout all time,
As though some dog-fight caught our roving eye.
It is no fight of ours, and there is naught
In it of vital interest to us,—
Save and except, perhaps, this single thing:
The lessons of the Sermon on the Mount,
Endangered after nineteen hundred years
Of service as the leaven of the earth,
Are to be swept away by this base creed
Of power, that makes efficiency its god.
But we are "neutral"— it is naught to us,
It gives the Midas touch that turns to gold —
The precious thing which in the olden times
Mankind made idols of — so we rejoice.
We see a nation, waxing great and strong,
Plotting, behind a screen of empty words,
Against the peace and safety of the earth,—
Forgetting nothing in their deep laid plans
Save the existence of Almighty God,
A God whose laws are just, who "will repay."
But we are "neutral" — we return our thanks
To Heaven for having "kept us out of war,"
The dreadful thing which, besides hurting men,
Clips figures off the balances of trade.
So let the game go on — whoever wins,
We can lose nothing — save our nation's soul —
Our old ideal of sacrifice of self

And all that renders living worth our while.
Ah, moral heights that keep us far removed
From all the stains of strife — preserves our calm —
And keeps us always "neutral"— blessed word!

TO OLD MT. UNION

Karo, Kero, Kiro, Kee!
Rah, Rah, Rah, for M. U. C.!
Alekekizenion! Alekizunion!
Rah, Rah, Rah, for old Mt. Union!

In my ancient days in college, where I found my fund of knowledge —
I regret to say its total is but small,
Yet I hold Mt. Union blameless, for by regions that are nameless,
It's a marvel I learned anything at all!

For I had no boundless yearning for absorbing useful learning,
And loitered in the Reading Room devouring magazines;
Nor did I hold high revel with those minions of the devil
Who wrought havoc with Mt. Union's peaceful scenes;

Who painted up the chapel with a lurid, streaky dapple,
And smeared it fore and aft with melted cheese,
Which assailed our shrinking noses with no perfume like the rose's,
But lingered many moons upon the breeze!

Nor was I the wicked donkey who took the ape
and monkey,
The Mummy, the gorilla — all the freaks in the
Museum —
And left them, duly labeled, in the chapel, which
enabled
Each professor to know which one stood for *him.*

You recall those students flighty, who, attired in
a nighty,
(Nay, let us draw the veil upon that scene),
And that deed of fiends benighted, who the wrath
of heaven invited
By painting Prexy's cow a gorgeous green.

Ah, today I mourn with sadness that I missed
those acts of gladness
And let others undertake them in my place,
Who now, no doubt, are teaching and lecturing
and preaching
With the sanctity of ministers of grace!

Since those old days in Ohio you have won and
wedded Scio,
And a schoolmate of my college days is Prexy,
heaven wots;
*Alekezenion! Alekizunion! Rah, Rah, Rah, for
old Mt. Union,*
On whose name I lay these few for-get-me-nots.
Oskewahwah! Skinnewahwah!
Shinnewahwah! Mt. Union!

WHAT IS IT ALL FOR?

Mark Twain tells of his little daughter, after apparently pondering over things in general, finally asking, "Mamma, what is it all for?" To the writer this seems the most important question ever asked — one over whose answer the philosophers and theologians have disputed for centuries, and which they will probably debate for all time.

Well may we ask again what it is for,
The purpose that its future holds in store;
The more we ask, we are but baffled more,
Since Science and the Scriptures join to say
That it shall end and wholly pass away —
Alas, the answer lies
Beyond our narrow skies!

Age after age, aye, since Time first began,
Slowly unfolds the wise and wondrous plan,
From empty chaos onward up to man —
Yet for the final ending of it all,
The wise men say, once more an empty ball.
How can it seem so glad,
When it is all so sad?

To what avail shall all the human race
Through weary ages struggle on apace,
Then its Creator utterly efface
All that the age-old effort hath achieved,
Ending as though it had not been conceived —
Brought forth from misty void,
To be again destroyed.

Such is our only answer — earth to earth —
So closely bound in one are Death and Birth;
And much that we achieve has little worth.
Yet through it all must every thoughtful man
Behold the working of an all-wise plan,
Whose end is never clear
To our dimmed vision here!

MY FAITH

Creeds seem to me like dull and faded flowers
That once were fresh and lovely, long ago,
But might have better served our later hours
If they had been passed by, and left to *grow.*

And I doubt not that every mortal man
Has worshipped by his lights, however dim,
A God he pictured out on his own plan —
A God that was Divine — at least to *him!*

Man writes his revelations and his creeds
With eyes half blinded by his hopes and fears;
Each serves in its own time some human needs —
But the unchanging God deals not in years.

So, while in none I utterly believe,
None would I wholly pass unheeding by;
Since truth and error ever interweave,
We find in each some message from on High.

The primal law of earthly things is growth;
In mind and spirit also must we grow;
Our cramping creeds should then, indeed, be loath
To say, "Thus far, no farther, shalt thou go."

Nor can I hold that to a favored few
The God of Ages gives all truth divine,
While other faiths are error, through and through,
With evil end and origin malign;

But rather hold that truth in many a guise
Gleams through them all, but changed in outward
dress;
That each may bring the Light to eager eyes,
And human need with aid and comfort bless.

So I believe the views of the Divine,
In which each man finds solace for his soul,
Are only fragments — yours as well as mine —
Each finding but a fraction of the Whole.

And since our wisdom, after all, is dumb
About so much in our existence *here*,
Why need our visions of the Life to come
Be limned in lines, unchangeable and clear?

We know through ages dark with hate and fear,
On groping, twilight paths our race has trod,
And hope, at last, the dawning day is near,
To light our pathway to the changeless God.

JUDGE NOT

"Judge not, that ye be not judged"

I WOULD these simple words of Christ
Might be obeyed with greater heed;
Our wayward feet, to wrong enticed,
Should teach the tongue their utmost need.

Ah no! A self appointed judge,
We sit upon our lofty throne,
Free to condemn the fellow drudge
Whose frailties differ from our own.

We know not through what mists of tears
Environment hath led them on,
Or, heritage of bygone years,
Heredity held them in pawn.

So, knowing not the hidden source
From which their wayward acts have sprung,
We let harsh judgment take its course,
And lash them with unbridled tongue.

Remembering not Whose voice it was
That bade us "first cast out the beam,"
We carp at all our neighbor does,
And censure flows in ceaseless stream.

But with what measure ye shall mete,
It shall be measured back again;
Who then shall say "revenge is sweet,"
And harshly judge his fellow men!

The world is wide, and narrow sects
Would better serve man's lowly lot
By harping less on outgrown texts,
And heeding Christ's own words, "Judge not."

I would these precious words of His
We might bear with us through the strife —
No more to know what hatred is,
No more to judge another's life!

THE HERMIT

I was a hermit, not in the living flesh,
Not barred from humankind by lonely miles,
Nor dwelling in some far, sequestered hut;
My hermitage was rather of the soul,
Shut out from human ties by unseen bars,
And loneliest among the jostling crowd.
Mere miles of space may quickly be traversed,
But the impalpable barriers that shut
The shrinking soul from human sympathy
Can only be surmounted — if at all —
By slow and groping steps on unknown paths.
My youth fed on the fancies of Romance,
And faithfully I worshipped at the shrine
Of the fair God of Things as they should be,
Unmindful of the God of Things that Are.
With passing years were these illusions lost,
And I was dowered with eyes that saw below
The fair exterior to the unclean core.
I saw, at last, Life's bitter irony,
The wine press whose unfeeling touch can crush
The wine of laughter from the grapes of tears.
Yet, through it all, I came at last to see
The danger in the path of souls like mine.
I saw that he whose highest aim in life
Is but to get the utmost *out* of it
Gets nothing that can be of lasting worth;
The soul grows rich alone through what it *spends*.
I have learned Faith from the perennial Spring
That ever bursts the Winter's buds anew,

Learned Patience from the slow and plodding plow,
And Charity from all the griefs and sins
Forever interwoven through our lot.
And, though the Life within may seek in vain
An outlet through the streams of spoken speech,
It may, perchance, like some deep-hidden spring,
Find outlet that, unseen, shall bless the earth,
Escaping from its spirit hermitage,
To merge and fuse its lot with all mankind.

THE PRICE

"For all we take we must pay; but the price is cruel high."
WISDOM OF PRIVATE MULVANEY.

LIFE lays its wealth before us — you and I
Take what we will — but ever, ere we die,
We find in truth, "the price is cruel high."

This hoary truth each soul anew must learn,
That nothing comes to those who nothing earn.
And he who takes must render full return.

In countless ways Life takes its bitter toll —
Health, peace — success, unsated at its goal —
All things are legal tender of the soul.

Sometimes the price may seem to us unjust —
One blind surrender to a fleshly lust
Bring costs that only end with "dust to dust!"

We seek escape from an entangling mesh
Of past mistakes — to each Fate comes afresh,
A Shylock asking for the pound of flesh.

We murmur at the cost, and to our cry,
"*The wage of sin is death*"— the old reply —
From the beginning has the price been high.

Nor must we pay a price for wrong alone,
And reap the harvest that ourselves have sown;
Yea, even good has costs that we must own.

All that we gain is somehow gained by loss;
The price is high for noble things, or gross,
And each in turn must bear his grievous cross.

So with the artist, to whose jealous art
Are sacrificed the passions of his heart,
And holiest of ties are rent apart.

"For all we take" the payment must be made,
Nor can it be evaded or delayed;
"The price is cruel high"— but it is paid.

Our envious eyes see lavish Fortune pour,
And swell our brother's portion more and more —
But he, and not ourselves, must pay the score.

We see the golden harvest, sheaf on sheaf,
Nor pause to think the reaping time is brief,
Or that the seed was sown in toil and grief.

We long for good to triumph over vice,
But find our souls too weak to pay the price —
So even Peter denied his Master thrice.

The art of living is the highest art —
Here lies its secret, that we play our part,
And pay its price with an ungrudging heart.

Life lays its wealth before us — with a sigh
Of unfulfilled desire we pass it by,
Remembering "the price is cruel high."

SAYIN' GOODBYE

THERE's words I always hate t' use — they'd fill at least a column —
'N' one of 'em's that word " goodbye "— it sounds so sad 'n' solumn!
You jus' can't say it t' y'r friends without y'r eyes a-smartin',
'N' seems as though this life of ours is jus' made up of partin'.
So, since my hatred of the word is great, and growin' greater,
My custom is t' say, instead, " So long, I'll see y' later."

Of course, I know " Goodbye " sounds best t' head a song er poem,
But t' th' friends y'r parted from, jus' as y' get t' know 'em,
It sounds so sort of final-like it draws y'r heart-strings tighter;
So it's my way t' pass it by f'r phrases that are brighter.
I hate " goodbye," " adieu," " farewell "—'n' I'm a hearty hater —
So in their place I always say, " So long, I'll see y' later."

I hate th' words " The End " in books, that seemed, in th' beginnin',
So jolly-like 'n' funny that y' couldn't keep fr'm grinnin'—

'N' then that word they use instead, I always wish
was minus,
W'y should they end an English book with that
blamed Latin "Finis"?
Dear Reader, if you'll be so kind, and to my wishes
cater,
We'll shake each other's paws 'n' say,
"So long, I'll see y' later!"

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